

HOW CHARMS WORK: A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO
OLD, MIDDLE, AND MODERN ENGLISH CHARMS

By

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Dedicated to the memory of my parents

Maria Dora Barbara Teresa Nagle Palacios
Junquera de la Creach

Robert Cook

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Analysis of charms has involved the disciplines of anthropology, metaphysics, folklore, and literary studies. Taking an interdisciplinary approach in order to benefit from the varied insights found in earlier work with charms, this dissertation gives attention to charms that have two basic purposes: binding and banishing. Selecting Old, Middle, and Modern English charms for discussion in terms of their components of thought, word, and deed, this dissertation gives attention to the ways charm performers have used language to accomplish their particular purposes.

The analysis of sound patterning discusses the ways in which rhythm, rhyme, and sound symbolism empower charms on a phonetic level. Hypermetricality and other metrical variations are examined in order to observe their phonetic reinforcement function in charms. Likewise, the sound

associations of alliteration, vowel harmony, repetition, and end-rhyme are defined, and the ways in which they strengthen charms are enumerated. Of necessity, a diachronic perspective informs the discussion of how the surface parameters of sound patterning devices have shifted as the language has evolved.

Aspects of the physical performance of charms are explored along sociolinguistic lines. The elements of magical performance are identified as writing, manner of verbal delivery, incorporation of significant objects, and accompanying physical action. The functions of magical performance are then presented as threefold: to accomplish the magical act, to inform (or reinform) the participants of traditional schemas, and, by this process, to reinforce cultural values.

Finally, the reciprocity of oppositional performances proceeding from ascendant and descendant paradigms within a culture is addressed. The dynamic in opposing magical performances is defined, illustrated by examples within our modern culture, and an argument for its ultimately beneficial effect upon the culture and upon both ascendant and descendant paradigms is made.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

Overview

Charms are carefully crafted, formulaic utterances used to alter the charm performer's reality by drawing upon powers perceived as supernatural. Although charms have been collected, anthologized, translated, explained, and historically contextualized, scant information about the semantic, phonological, and performance aspects which combine to empower charms in the eyes of their users is currently available. That which does exist is scattered across the disciplines of folklore, anthropology, literature, history, and metaphysics. The purpose of this dissertation is to apply an interdisciplinary approach to analyze the linguistic components which have made charms a widely used genre of magical language in the past and in the present.

The Components of Charms

The phrase "thought, word, and deed," which signifies complete dedication to a premise, is used in this dissertation to refer to the elements of intent and meaning

(thought), the power of the sounds of the words themselves (word), and the elements of physical performance (deed) which signify complete dedication to a magical premise and thus enhance the strength of the magical language of charms.

In Language and Mind (1972) linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky tells us that

At the crudest level of description, we may say that a language associates sound and meaning in a particular way; to have command of a language is to be able, in principle, to understand what is said and produce a signal with an intended semantic interpretation. (p. 115)

Based on the work in pragmatics by Green (1989), Grice (1975), and Gumperz (1982 a; 1982 b), we can posit that to have command of magical language also requires correct interpretation and execution of intent. Therefore, this discussion will address how the magical intent of the charm performer is clarified and enriched through the use of semantic resonance, speech acts, and syntactic manipulation.

With the pronunciation of the words of charms, intent is translated into magical action (Sokolova, 1992; Reichard, 1944). The upcoming discussion will also inquire into the ways in which rhythm, rhyme, and sound symbolism are used to conjure additional strength for the charm performer's magical act.

Along with an inquiry into the elements of "thought" and "word," this dissertation also address the element "deed": physical performance in cultural context. It is important to clarify how the word "performance" is used in this discussion, for it has a broad currency in several

academic fields and means different things to different disciplines. Theoretical linguist Noam Chomsky (1965) distinguished between the innate knowledge of native speakers (competence) and what they actually produce and understand in linguistic exchange (performance). This is not the sense in which the word "performance" will be used in the upcoming discussion, although clearly, Chomsky's ideas have had an impact on the analysis of physical performance of certain language genres in cultural context (see Briggs, 1988).

In his work on speech acts, philosopher J. L. Austin (1962) used the word "performative" to describe verbs which could not be evaluated by traditional true/false truth conditions but which rather accomplished an action in the saying of the word. Along with other elements of magical intent; i.e., semantic resonance and syntactic manipulation, speech acts are discussed in this text, and the term "performative verb" appears in that context. Although Austin's and subsequent work in speech acts contributes much toward the understanding of magical language, the term "performative verb" is not to be confused with the concept of physical performance in cultural context--what in this discussion is treated as the "deed" component of charms.

Here the word "performance" derives its meaning from recent work in ethno poetics, a branch of scholarly inquiry grounded in anthropology and sociolinguistics. Ethno poetics inquires into the various components of delivery which

characterize the performance of verbal art within a culture. Other formulaic genres of supra-communicative language such as myth, folktales, proverbs--and even jokes--have been analyzed under the aegis of ethnopoetics (Glassie, 1982; Gossen, 1973; Sherzer, 1983; Briggs, 1988), and the insights gained in other quarters will be applied now to the analysis of the performance of charms. The aspects of magical performance addressed in this discussion are first the elements considered necessary to perform the magical deed, then the functions of the magical performance within the cultural context, and finally, the dynamic opposition of magical performances within the culture.

Based upon insights of anthropologists¹ and magicians themselves, this discussion identifies the elements of physical performance in magic as the following: 1) writing or inscribing magical language, 2) verbal delivery, 3) use of magically significant objects, and 4) accompanying physical actions.

Grounding itself in the work done by sociolinguists Dell Hymes (1981, 1986) and Charles Briggs (1988), this discussion also addresses the functions of magical performance. In his book Competence in Performance (1988), Briggs documented the Lenten traditions of Mexican Americans in the Southwest. Drawing upon the work of sociolinguist Dell Hymes, Briggs claimed that in order to understand the functions of performance within a culture, we must know who the performer is, what the audience expects, and why the

performance is taking place. In his book In Vain I Tried To Tell You (1981) Dell Hymes argued that there is a reciprocity between tradition and performance, and that through performance, a community is informed of its traditions. Briggs expounded on that concept, maintaining that tradition carriers who are performing genres of formulaic speech "become a sounding board for a chorus of innumerable voices" (p.1).

While imparting knowledge of tradition to others, performers are externalizing, "realizing" their underlying cultural and traditional knowledge (p. 81). Dell Hymes had spoken at length about the theories of the philosopher Ernst Cassirer, a refugee from Nazi Germany who struggled, not only in his writings, but in his life, against the chasms created by war and intellectual isolationism. Cassirer proposed that consciousness itself entailed connectedness: ". . . the 'I' and the 'you' exist only insofar as they exist 'for each other,' only insofar as they stand in the functional relation of being reciprocally conditioned" (1961, p. 107). "In speech and art," Cassirer wrote, "the individuals not only share what they already possess; it is only by virtue of this sharing process in speech and art that individuals have attained what they possess" (italics mine, p. 113). Thus the functions of performance are discussed here in terms of reciprocity between the performer, the audience, and the context culture. They are identified as threefold: 1) to accomplish the magical act,

2) to inform--and reinform--participants of shared cultural schema, and 3) thereby to reinforce cultural values.

Finally, concepts proceeding from such unlikely allies as metaphysics and scientific historiography are used to argue for a dynamic opposition of magical performances within the culture. In magical parlance, the idea that opposites interact through their polarity is often called "The Union of Opposites" (Bonewits, 1970; Pennick, 1992). In scientific historiography, the references are to "ascendant and descendant paradigms" and "cynosures" (Hymes, 1974; Koerner, 1976, 1982; Kuhn, 1970). The way in which magical performances from apparently opposing paradigms engage in reciprocal empowerment and enjoy a dynamic relationship in their opposition is the final aspect of performance addressed in this discussion.

This dissertation, then, draws on the insights of scholars who have worked in very diverse fields as it proceeds. Chapter One first examines how magic in general and charms in particular have been defined in the literature of the above-mentioned fields and presents a working definition of these terms for the ensuing discussion. It then proposes the classification of charms based upon their adherence to basic magical precepts and presents them as being of two types: those seeking to bind desirable elements or banish undesirable ones. A further distinction between low and high intensity is also posited.

Chapter Two focuses on the banishing and binding intents of five Anglo-Saxon charms, and in doing so gives particular attention to the use of homophones and similar-sounding words with reference to a phenomenon called "semantic resonance." Here I draw upon the work in lexical semantics of Cruse (1986), Hill (1985), and Lehrer (1974). Chapter Two also calls upon the theory of "speech acts" developed by Austin (1962), Furberg (1971), Holdcroft (1978), Searle (1969, 1979), and Vanderveken (1990) and gives brief attention to rhythm as defined by Chickering, (1989), Mitchell and Robinson (1992), Rodrigues (1993), and Storms (1975); rhyme as defined by Creed (1964) and Pope (1981); and sound symbolism as defined by Jacobson (1960), Nelson (1978), and Yolen (1981). Chapter Two discusses the performance, or "deed" component of charms in terms of the elements of physical performance in magical action mentioned above.

The treatment of the verbal magic of Middle English charms in Chapter Three involves discussion of the topic of "semantic fields," or lexical meaning relations (Akmajian et al., 1993, p. 203). Drawing upon recent work in lexical semantics by Grandy (1987), Lehrer and Lehrer (1982), and Schiffer (1988), this chapter gives attention to ways our present knowledge of word-meaning connections may have worked with the elements of rhythm, rhyme, and sound symbolism in Middle English charms. The discussion of the "deed" component in Middle English charms illustrates how

the traditional performance elements discussed in Chapter Two endured in Middle English charms and then proceeds to a discussion of the functions of magical performance as defined above.

Chapter Four discusses the components of "thought," "word," and "deed" in relation to Modern English charms. The devices of semantic resonance, speech acts, and lexical meaning relations in conjunction with sound patterning devices are shown to continue to empower modern charms. Chapter Four then offers a brief explanation of how syntactic structures can have a semantic impact on magical language. In doing so, it refers to "syndetic parataxis" as defined by Mitchell and Robinson in their introductory Old English text (1992). The "deed" component of banishing and binding charms is discussed in Chapter Four in terms of the interaction of ascendant and descendant performance paradigms.

Finally, Chapter Five concludes the dissertation by identifying the implications of the research while addressing its limitations. In doing so, it also suggests possible directions for further inquiry.

Charms are not nursery rhymes, snatches of gnomic wisdom, or poems, although they often appear in those guises. Rather, they are overtly magical utterances most commonly used by average people to alter their reality when easier and more predictable physical means are either not accessible or not effective (Cook, 1993). Since charms are

used to make magic, the first task here is to give attention to how magic has been defined in the general literature of the fields of investigation listed above and then to provide a workable definition of magic for the purposes of this discussion.

Definition of Magic

Historian Michael Edwardes cautions us that "Magic is a dangerous word" (1977, p. 1). "Until very recently," he states, "historians who bothered to consider magic at all could be divided roughly into two schools--the weak stomached and the embarrassed." This is because, traditionally, magic has been defined not only by historians but also by anthropologists, literary scholars, and folklorists as a "primitive" practice containing characteristics which rendered it substantively different from religion. Yet it is well to remember that the Latin root of this "dangerous word" derived from Persian, in which it referred to a Medean priest of the state sanctioned religion. In the second century BCE, Roman writer Apuleius of Madaura reminded his readers of this:

If what I read in large numbers of authors be true, namely that "magician" is the Persian word for priest, what is there criminal in being a priest and having due knowledge, science and skill in ceremonial law, sacrificial duties, and the binding rules of religion?
 --Apologia 25, The Apologia and Florida of Apuleius of Madaura.

In ancient Rome, the word "magic" was used to refer to the spiritual practices of the Persians, with which the

Romans were unfamiliar, while the word "religion" referred to their own spiritual practices which the general populace understood and approved. In his etymological foray, Apuleius attempts to illustrate that practices which his culture contemptuously referred to as "magic," were consensually revered as "religion" in another culture. When Catholicism was the widely accepted spiritual paradigm in Western Europe, the spiritual practices of the Romans were called "magic" while those sanctioned by the Church of Rome were called "religion." And again when the Protestant Reformation swept the continent, the spiritual practices of Catholics were called "magic" and "Popish sorcery" by those church reformers who saw their own spiritual practices as "religion."

In more recent scholarship, the use of the words "magic" and "religion" to refer to unfamiliar and familiar spiritual practices respectively has endured, and this delineation has naturally entailed a certain denigration of that which is unfamiliar. Some anthropologists, like Robert Lowie (1936), have seen magic as a primitive type of religion, while certain literary scholars portray magic as atavistic, regressive, irrational, or obsolete (Taylor, 1979). Many anthropologists have described magic as naive and logically untenable (Frazier, 1922; Levi-Strauss, 1949). Folklorists have evinced a similar bias toward the primitive aspect of magic in their widespread classification of magical practices under the headings of "superstitions" or

"folk beliefs" (Aarne, 1961; Brunvand, 1962; Creighton, 1968; Randolph, 1947).

In the early part of this century, much research in magic was done in societies considered by the researchers themselves to be less culturally evolved than their own (Buck, 1936; Evans-Pritchard, 1929; Levi-Straus, 1949; Malinowski, 1926, 1935) and this may have contributed to the notion that magic is practiced by people whose cultures are substantially less complex or sophisticated than ours. The continuing study of magic in third world societies today (Nutini, 1993) could reinforce that notion.

Seeing magic as something practiced by primitive, "different" people has naturally encouraged the tendency to theorize about how the spiritual practices of these "other" people differed from our own. Many scholars who have addressed the issue of how magic differs from religion (Hall, 1990; Idigoras, 1991) have concluded that magic (practiced by primitive "others") is imperious while religion (practiced by our own "civilized" culture) is propitiatory. Anthropologist Sir James Frazier saw magic as imperious (and imperative) and religion as suppliant and propitiatory. This led him to assert that religion was therefore more advanced, for it entailed the sophisticated awareness that humans are actually powerless to control the forces of nature without the intervention of supreme beings (1922).

Godfrid Storms (1975), whose collection of Old English charms will be relied upon in Chapter Two, held a similar view. Storms believed that "The magician is inclined to regard his own powers as equal to those of the gods, so that we frequently see an opposition between magic and religion" (p. 34). This view has been more recently expressed by historian Valerie Flint (1991), who articulates the distinction between magic and religion as follows:

Religion, then, at its best perhaps demands of its practitioners a disposition rather different from that required by magic at its mightiest. Religion in this sense requires reverence, an inclination to trust, to be open and to please, and be pleased by powers superior in every way to humankind; magic may wish to subordinate and to command these powers. (p. 8)

Anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski's cultural orientation propelled him to attempt to delineate the differences between magic and religion, although his direct observations in the field showed more similarities than differences between them (Shack, 1985). Religion and magic were both, in Malinowski's cultural schema, within the arena of the sacred as opposed to the profane (to which he consigns science, as it has no spiritual component in the twentieth century). Both were used to confront the terrors and dangers of life, but he saw magic as intellectually circumscribed and ultimately pragmatic; i.e., geared toward a future goal, while religion encompassed moral and spiritual abstract conceptions of universal power, whose rituals were "an end in themselves." The problematic distinctions Malinowski draws between magic and religion

illustrate the difficulty in maintaining these boundaries.

Of religion he says

Religious faith establishes, fixes, and enhances all valuable mental attitudes, such as reverence for tradition, harmony with environment, courage and confidence in the struggle with difficulties and at the prospect of death. (p. 69)

while he says of magic

It enables man to carry out with confidence his important tasks, to maintain his poise and mental integrity in fits of anger, in the throes of hate, of unrequited love, of despair and anxiety. The function of magic is to ritualize man's optimism, to enhance his faith in the victory of hope over fear. Magic expresses the greater value for man of confidence over doubt, of steadfastness over vacillation, of optimism over pessimism. (*italics mine*, 1948, p. 70)

Another proposed difference between magic and religion is that religion is beneficent while magic is malevolent (see Marett, 1914; Mauss, 1972; and Preuss, 1914). Although this attitude has its strongest proponents outside the academic arena, occasionally scholars betray their opinions to this effect in their discussions of related issues (see Harris, 1980).

One distinction between magic and religion which has received intermittent attention is that religion is open to all while magic is hidden and occult, or that religion is democratic while magic requires specialized practitioners. Malinowski's field-work among the Trobrianders of the Pacific Archipelago made it clear that these distinctions were problematic, for his results show behavior which our culture defines as magical being widely used in a societally sanctioned way to benefit the whole community (see

Malinowski summarized in Young, 1988, p. 56-61 and Malinowski, 1935). In his recent contribution to the field, Daniel R. Shaw (1993) has confirmed the democratic and accessible nature of magic as used by the inhabitants of Papua New Guinea.

Just as Shaw's work in anthropology has disproved that the difference between religion and magic is one of accessibility in the community, scholars' contributions in other fields have likewise weakened this distinction. In literary studies, Linda Woodbridge (1994) called into question the postulate that magic and religion differ in their degree of accessibility to the community when she acknowledged the widespread belief in and practice of magic by Elizabethans. Far from classifying magic as a secret art dominated by specialized practitioners, Woodbridge sees a widespread culturally accepted phenomenon that was both understood and respected, and she asserts that "the boundary between religion and magic has always been fluid" (p. 32).

In recent years, scholars have also called into question the other distinctions between magic and religion which have been postulated. Folklorists have begun to propose less pejorative terms for magical practice (Dundes, 1961; M.O. Jones, 1967) and the "negative connotations of unsophistication and ignorance" which these terms implied have been acknowledged (Brunvand, 1986).

Anthropologist Mary Douglas refused to grant moral superiority to the spiritual persuasions of scholars over

those of the subjects they studied. Her objection to the distinction between religion and magic as one of benevolence versus malevolence called into question the polarity of "civilized" religion over "primitive" magic. She maintained that "high ethical content is not the prerogative of 'evolved' religions" (1966, p. 19).

Literary historian Barbara Howard Traister (1984), recognized that the malevolence/benevolence dichotomy can be an artificial construction, which she illustrated with her description of seventeenth-century magus Tommaso Campanella, who saw his celebration of "divine magic" as a gift from a Christian god who approved the righteous practice of natural magic.

Historians have also begun to question the legitimacy of the premise that magic is imperious while religion is propitiatory, and that therein lies the difference between the two. What Frazier identified as the "imperiousness" of magic, historian Michael Edwardes (1977) calls "a statement of faith in the capacity of man." Literary scholar Richard Kieckhefer (1989) asserts that far from being readily identifiable to their users as imperious or propitiatory, charms and prayers were often indistinguishable to their users in the Middle Ages. This leads to the deduction that if, in fact, religion were identifiably propitiatory in contrast to the imperious character of magic, it is reasonable to assume that the users themselves could tell the difference.

Finally, Malinowski's suggestion that the difference between magic and religion lies in the practical goal of the former as opposed to the abstract goal of the latter has been questioned by Isaac Bonewits, who holds the only academic degree in magic granted by a university in modern times: a B.A. in magic from the University of California. He states

Is a Catholic priest saying a mass for rain during a drought performing magic or religion? How about a sorcerer performing a spell to damn an enemy to eternal unrest, thus using non-physical means for a practical end; isn't that religion? . . . Though separations can be made and sometimes must be made, Malinowski's separations are so poorly constructed that a hippogriff could fly through them. (1970, p. 32)

Although historians, anthropologists, folklorists, and literary analysts have not as yet reached a consensus in the definition of the word "magic," magical practitioners and theorists themselves display surprising agreement about what magic is--and is not. Writers in metaphysics, who actually view the magical paradigm from an insider's perspective, do not distinguish between magic and religion, except, perhaps, in the matter of hierarchical structure, which could be viewed to exist to a greater extent in the latter. Rather, they hold that magic is of ancient provenance, exists universally in all times and cultures, and has been an essential element of all religions (Bonewits, 1970; Butler, 1949; Cavendish, 1977; Gleadow, 1976; Guiley, 1989).

Magical practitioners themselves, whose views may be seen to merit particular consideration here, generally define magic as an attempt to alter the physical world

through nonphysical means. Although performers of charms acknowledge the role that the human will plays in magic, (Butler, 1949; Crowley, 1940) they do not, therefore, concede that this element can distinguish magic from religion, since they view all conscious attempts at integration within a supernatural paradigm as implying the will of the individual to do so (Gleadow, 1976).

Many claims, then, have been made about the differences between the meanings of the words "religion" and "magic," but their usage seems to be founded less on any universal truth than on a possibly unacknowledged cultural bias. This observation is supported by the work of anthropologist Alan Dundes (1968), who pointed out how cultural privileging insidiously "affects the formation of supposedly objective analytical categories" (p. 418). Dundes illustrated how, while scholars and scientists often believe they can see "objective reality in culture-free terms," often "what scientists and scholars present as bona fide analytical categories are in fact ethnocentric extensions of their own native categories" (p. 418).

Since the task at hand is a descriptive analysis of the linguistic elements which serve to empower charms in the minds of their users, the discussion to be presented here attempts to avoid, as much as possible, the ethnocentric extensions of our own native categories. Thus it does not distinguish between magic and religion; nor does it impose a

characterization of savagery, ignorance, or malevolence on the magical paradigm nor on the performers of charms.

For the purposes of this discussion, magic is defined as a spiritual orientation which seeks to affect aspects of the material world by drawing upon power perceived as supernatural. This orientation is inherently informed by a respect for and belief in forces unknown, has an integrative nature, and requires a willingness to participate in a larger, ultimately uncontrollable schema. As Richard Cavendish describes it, it is a desire to be included in "the right order of things" (1977, p. 2). Having defined magic, then, the next task is to provide a workable definition of charms.

Definition of Charms

Charms are formulaic utterances which translate a specific magical intent into reality through prescribed articulation and physical performance strategies. The fact that charms are formulaic utterances is supported by Lea Olsan (1992), who reminds us that our word charm comes from the Latin word carmen, which the Oxford Latin Dictionary defines as "a solemn ritual utterance, usually sung or chanted in a metrical form."

That charms have a specific magical intent has been argued by scholars as diverse as T.S. Eliot and Godfrid Storms. In The Music of Poetry (1942), Eliot defines charms as "very practical formulae designed to produce definite

results, such as getting a cow out of a bog" (p. 62). In Anglo-Saxon Magic (1975), Storms gives a more scholarly corroboration of just how specific and practical charms can be: There are charms to control shivering fits (no. 40, p. 278), fix a lame horse (no. 46, p. 284), stop a swine herd from dwindling (no. 24, p. 254-255), and prevent theft (nos. 11-15, pp. 202-217).

While the magical intent of many charms is to address a specific physical goal, the goal of many others is spiritual or emotional. Thus there are charms to churn butter, stop hiccups, and get rid of rats; but there are also charms to win love, exact revenge, block curses, and draw good luck. Whether their application is physical or spiritual, charms are most commonly used by ordinary people to address the concerns of their daily lives: food, health, well-being, and love.

Support for my assertion that charms translate intent into reality through prescribed articulation and physical performance strategies comes from diverse avenues. It is generally accepted that the articulation of charms involves strategies which imbue them with supra-communicative qualities. The Oxford Latin Dictionary tells us that a charm is often delivered like a song; it is intoned, chanted, recited, that is, it possesses aural characteristics that set it apart from the prosodics of communicative speech. Not only do charms have a recognizable aural profile which sets them apart from

ordinary speech, they incorporate elements of physical performance. Storms (1975) points out this component and maintains that incantation without some performance element is almost never seen in magical practice. He supports his point with observations that there is a striking conformity of magical gestures around the world which may well be because the history of nonverbal acts of magic is longer than that of verbal acts (p. 32).

Popular usage occasionally applies the word charm to written, rather than spoken magical language. Thus a magical formula written on paper and worn around the neck, or inscribed over a barn door, is often called a "charm." Similarly, magically potent physical objects devoid of language, either written or oral, are also referred to as charms. Although that usage is accepted by many, this discussion employs a more precise terminology and will classify such objects "amulets" or "talismans," giving them attention only as they are used in the practice of verbal magic.

Although more unusual, the performance of actions without accompanying formulaic language is sometimes referred to as a "charm." In fact, we still see people throw salt over their shoulders, knock on wood, make the sign of the cross, and, more recently, the anti-vampire sign with crossed forefingers, etc. Although this usage is acknowledged by some, this discussion gives attention to

physical actions only in terms of their relationship to prescribed acts of magical utterance.

Although every charm does not incorporate intentional, aural, and physical performance components to the same degree, the charms selected for discussion in this linguistic analysis display a magical intent which is verbalized in formulaic language and accompanied by elements of physical performance. In other words, this dissertation will focus on charms which draw upon the three components of thought, word, and deed to bind or banish elements of the performer's reality.

Binding and Banishing Charms

Charms vary in the degree of completeness of the elements of thought, word, and deed as well as in their use of magically significant objects. They also differ widely in length and, of course, in surface application. Conceivably, any of these differences could be used to classify charms, but for this discussion I propose a classification system based upon the intent of the charm performer as it conforms to the basic precepts of magic.

The most famous magical precept is the Law of Sympathy, also often called the Law of Association. Sir James Frazier articulated this law in his exhaustive work on magical practices, The Golden Bough (1922), and it is corroborated by the work of other writers on the subject of magic (Bailey, 1951, p. 8; Ennemoser, 1854, Vol. 1; Gleadow, 1976,

p. 22). The Law of Association holds that things can be powerfully connected in surprising ways and that by finding and making the connection, we acquire the power. Modern chaos theory also illustrates the Law of Association when it asserts that there are connections between seemingly alien elements, and that these connections, if they could only be perceived, would show order rather than chaos in our world design.

Binding charms, which seek to make or enhance the possible and sometimes surprising connections between elements in our world, proceed directly from the magical Law of Association. Charms which seek to bind elements in our world can vary in intensity, and their intent to bind can be of a physical or a spiritual nature.² A butter churning charm to obtain butter from clabber is a binding charm with a concrete physical intent, and it is of low intensity because it seeks to reinforce a physical connection which already exists: To wit, an actual churn is working toward the same end on the physical plane. A simple blessing which seeks to bind divine energy and well-being to a named recipient is also a binding charm of low intensity because it seeks to enhance an associational pattern in the charm performer's world, although it has a spiritual rather than a physical intent.

Charms designed to bind a treasure trove to a designated spot for all eternity (like the Beowulf charm to be discussed in Chapter Two), to physically paralyze thieves

in the act of stealing (like the charm from the Second Shepherds' Play to be discussed in Chapter Three), or to prevent a murderer from leaving the scene of the crime (like the Gainesville charm of Chapter Four) are binding charms of high intensity. These charms seek to translate serious magical intent into physical reality of ambitious proportions and to create connections between elements in the charm performer's world.

The magical Law of Association holds that things are connected in surprising ways, so it also contains the idea of opposing elements being connected through their polarity. Polarities, because they are connected, each contain something of the essence of the other within their own essence. It is the connection which exists between polarities, the germinal essence of the opposite contained within, which grants the charmer power to prevent or sever unwanted connections. This concept is often expressed in a magical sublaw called the "Union of Opposites" (Adler, 1986; Bonewits, 1971; Pennick, 1992; Zolar, 1970) but which I prefer to call the "Dynamic of Opposition" because it expresses the notion that opposites are connected and furthermore, that in their connection, opposites share a dynamic reciprocity. Some charms, then, rely upon the notion of the Dynamic of Opposition to banish unwanted elements from the charmer's reality. Though we do not call physicians "magicians" or even "medicine men," modern medicine often employs this precept, using vaccines to

prevent disease, or using poisons in minute doses to effect cures.

Charms which seek to banish elements from the performer's reality can also have either a physical or a spiritual goal, and they vary in intensity as well. Some banishing charms have a passive, rather than an active quality. They seek to keep negative elements away from the charmer, to "bounce them off" like the time-honored schoolyard charm:

Playground Protection Charm

I'm rubber and you're glue.
Whatever you say bounces off me
And sticks to you.

A protective charm against "flying venom" (the plague) is a banishing charm with a concrete physical goal, and it is of low intensity because it does not seek to actively cast out an element, but only prevent it from entering. A protective charm against "the night mare" (terrifying evil spirits who stalk at night) is also of low intensity, since it seeks to banish by keeping out rather than casting out, but here the goal is not physical. Rather, it is spiritual--to prevent an attack on the soul during the vulnerability of sleep.

Of high intensity are banishing charms which actively seek to cast out an element once it has insinuated itself within the reality of the charm performer. These high-intensity banishing charms can also have both physical and spiritual goals. For example, a charm to cast out a tumor from the body is a high intensity banishing charm with a

concrete physical goal, while a charm to cast out demons has a spiritual goal.

Just as the magical Law of Association and its sublaw, the Dynamic of Opposition, are inextricably interwoven, binding and banishing can be interconnected in magical practice, with elements of both binding and banishing intents contained in the same charm, as the following chapter will illustrate. Let us turn now to a discussion of how the components of thought, word, and deed collaborate to realize the binding and banishing intents of Anglo-Saxon charm performers.

Notes

1. See Barbara Tedlock's doctoral dissertation: Quiche Maya Divination: A Theory Of Practice Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International.

2. For a more thorough discussion of the applications of binding spells in the ancient world, see Gager (1992), Curse Tablets and Binding Spells From the Ancient World.

CHAPTER TWO ANGLO-SAXON BANISHING AND BINDING

Overview

In Anglo-Saxon times, charms were concerned with things like having a baby, keeping bees from roaming into the wood (where it is difficult to find them and take their honey), getting good crops, and safely completing a journey. And, of course, there were charms to heal people and animals of every conceivable disease from tumors to the mysterious "elf-shot."¹

Godfrid Storms, who published a collection of eighty-six charms under the title Anglo-Saxon Magic in 1948, clearly saw that some charms were medical, others agricultural, and still others spiritual in their application. Along with a diversity in structure and ritual atmosphere, Storms also recognized the adherence to certain magical principles: the presence of animism in some, but not all, ancient magical practice; the use of symbolically potent substances such as blood, saliva, water, honey, and wine; the practice of transference, and the Law of Association, which Storms called the "idea of similarity."

In a collection of Old English poetry titled The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems, Dobbie (1942), referring to previous attempts to classify Anglo-Saxon charms as either "heathen"

or Christian, said that "such distinctions are not easy to justify" (p. cxxxii). He also recognized that two of the twelve charms he had selected had previously been classified as "herbal charms," but pointed out that they contained other incantatory elements which united them with many "non-herbal" charms. Dobbie therefore stated that he did not pretend to classify the charms he selected "on the basis of form and content"; yet he himself selected only those charms whose metrical form was sufficiently regular to warrant their inclusion in an edition of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Dobbie's principle of selection, then, was form. Mine will be purpose.

Charms have two primary purposes: they seek to either keep out or cast out unwanted elements from the performer's reality, or they attempt to reinforce or establish desired connections within that reality; i.e., they seek to either banish or to bind. This discussion will focus first on two high-intensity banishing charms of popular provenance. The charm Against a Wen, whose goal is to cast out a tumor from the body, demonstrates how similar sounding words and homophones, by a process I call semantic resonance, can enrich the meaning of a charm. Field Ceremonies is a more complex charm designed to remove a sorcerer's curse which could prevent fertility. It will be discussed in terms of its traditional elements of physical performance.

The next charm to be presented here, a charm against "misbirth," shows how banishing and binding elements can be

combined in the same magical utterance. The discussion of this charm gives special attention to the ways in which speech acts, as defined by J.L. Austin (1962) and John Searle (1969, 1979, 1989) can increase the potency of the utterance in the mind of the performer. The last two Anglo-Saxon charms are high-intensity binding charms: one an ancient bee-binding folk charm, and the other a binding charm embedded in the epic poem Beowulf. A descriptive analysis of the ways in which sound associations strengthen these two charms is then presented. But let us begin with a charm from popular culture.

Banishing the Wen

The Charm Wip Wennum: Against Wens

From the REGIUS 4 A XIV Manuscript (Storms, 1975; p. 154).

- 1 Wenne, Wenne, Wenchichenne
 her ne scealt þu timbrien, ne nenne tun habben.
 as þu scealt norþ heonene to þan nihgan berhge
 þer þu havest ermig enne broþer.
- 5 He þe sceal legge leaf et heafde.
 Under fot wolves, under veþer earnes,
 under earnes clea, a þu geweornie.
 Clinge þu alswa col on heorþe
 scing þu alswa scern awage,
- 10 and weorne alswa weter on ambre
 Swa litel þu gewurpe alswa linsetcorn,
 and miccli lesse alswa anes handwurmes hupeban,
 and alswa litel þu gewurpe þet þu nawhit gewurpe.

Against Wens

- 1 Wen, wen, little wen,
 Here thou shalt not build, nor make a town
 But thou shalt go north to the nearby hill.
 There, thou hast, wretch, a brother
- 5 He shall lay a leaf on your head.
 Under the wolf's paw, under eagle's feather,
 Under eagle's claw, ever may thou wither.
 May thou wither as coal on a hearth.
 Shrink thou as dung away,

10 And fade as water in a pail.
 May thou become small as a linsetcorn,
 Smaller than an itchmite's hipbone,
 And so little may thou become that thou become nothing
 at all.

The intent of this Old English charm is to banish a harmful wen, or tumor, from the body. It accomplishes this by addressing the wen directly and telling it clearly that it is being banished from the body to a northern hill (possibly a euphemism for a burying ground). The wen is then conjured with powerful magical objects, i.e., a leaf, a wolf's paw, an eagle's feather, and an eagle's claw, which are intended to cause it to wither away until it "becomes nothing."

This, then, is the basic approach prescribed by the words of the Old English wen charm, but I would also suggest that Wip Wennum reinforces its intent to banish the tumor by bringing to bear numerous sub-strata of meaning within the charm, using a process I call semantic resonance. Archibald Hill (1985) defines this phenomenon as the incorporation of textual "signals" which bring to the meaning of the text "associational meanings." Hill gives attention to two ways of enriching meaning in a text: modification of meaning, and double meaning (or punning). The Wen Charm makes use of both of these meaning enrichment techniques.

For example, the modification of meaning provides semantic resonance in the use of the word wenne. The word for "tumor" in Old English is wen, not wenne. As Cockayne pointed out in 1866, this is an incantation where direct

address is used throughout (Cockayne, 1866), so the suffixival -e cannot be indicative of the dative case. Why then do we have wenne instead of wen? It certainly serves to maintain the trochaic metrical structure, but it also may add to the meaning of the charm, since the verb wenan means to believe or imagine, to expect or hope, but also to despair of (Hall, 1970). Thus, on a deeper level, the sound resemblance of the two words may add further meaning, and wenne can be construed to be an exhortation to the tumor to give up, and an exhortation to the charmer to bring to bear all possible faith in success. The verb wenian adds its aspects of meaning as well: it means to break off, to wean from, to become tame and broken.

The word wenne is repeated twice, building power through repetition and, of course, through alliteration. Then the charmer says wenchichenne, for which Storms (1975:158) suggests the diminutive meaning "wen-chicken." Storms admits that throughout his experience with Old English, he has never encountered another noun with the suffix "chicken" to denote the diminutive. If Magoun's interpretation holds, (1937, p. 21), the line could have originally been wende ic heonene, or "send I hence," and through reduction may have evolved into wenchichenne. This original meaning, "I send (you) away," could remain underneath the surface connotation of the diminutive, again adding additional dimensions of meaning to the utterance.

In line 3, the wen is banished from the body north (where the terrifying frost giants abide) to a nihgan berhge. This phrase illustrates how both meaning modification and double meaning can enrich the power of the charm. The adjective nihgan is usually taken to mean "nigh" or "neighboring," but it bears a very close resemblance to the Anglo-Saxon word for nine, nigon. Why should the underlying concept of the number nine be used to modify the meaning of nihgan? Storms tells us that the number nine was a magically powerful one for the Anglo-Saxons, and in addition, there is a certain kind of tumor which in Modern English is called a furuncle (O.E. cyrnel) which shows precisely nine protrusions or eyes, called negenooog. (1975:153).

Berhge is usually translated as "hill," but modification of meaning occurs when the primary meaning of beorg "hill" is further refined and enriched by the secondary meaning of "burial mound"; thus the wen is banished not just to any hill, but to a hill where the dead are buried: hence it is banished to its own destruction. There may also be a double meaning involved with the word berghe, for the similar-sounding word burg can also mean town (Anderson, 1949). Accessing another contextual web of meaning related to town metaphors can reinforce the concept of the nine mounds of the furuncle, which could constitute a town. This secondary meaning of berhge allows it to semantically resound with the word tun at the end of line

two, which means an enclosure, garden, dwelling, or a group of dwellings, as in a town.

Line 4, which refers to the wretched wen's brother, is obscure; Storms (1975) postulates that this is due to a lacuna in the text. From our understanding of the Dynamic of Opposition, we could see the brother as related to the wen: a similar disease spirit in fact. Through what I call the dynamic of opposition and Storms (p. 157) calls the notion of "like destroys like," the power of the brother could be called upon to destroy the wen as the power of a snake skin is called upon to prevent snakebite. This idea is borne out by line five, which informs the wen that his brother will participate in the magical banishment by placing a leaf on his head.

Starting at line 5, the use of precise metaphor contributes to the semantic resonance of the charm. Lines 5, 6, and 7 refer to what may have been accompanying magical actions: laying a leaf over the tumor, passing a wolf's foot over it, an eagle's feather and an eagle's claw. These actions derive sympathetic power by symbolizing the attack on the tumor by ferocious animals and may well have other significance more obscure to us. It is nevertheless possible that the intent of the charm performer is enhanced through the symbolism of totemic animals.

Making use of sympathetic magic, lines 8 through 10 use simile as a part of diminishing magic. The tumor is reduced in the same way natural processes of reduction take place.

The tumor will shrink like coal (col) on the hearth. The word col can also mean cool, or cold, another element which is banished by the heat of the hearth. The tumor will shrink away like dung. There is also another dimension to the word awage. Aside from the adverbial connotation of movement away from something, the verb awaegan means to destroy or annul, and the verb awacian means to grow weak and little, to decline away. In line 10, the tumor is conjured to vanish or evaporate like water when left in a pail.

In lines 11 through 13 the relentless onslaught on the tumor continues. Incrementally, the now-ravaged tumor is further contracted by comparing it to specific minuscule objects: a grain of linseed (linsetcorn) which is tiny, although one can see it, then an insect's hipbone, which one cannot. We are not certain what kind of insect a handwurm was, but Storms has suggested it was an itchmite (p. 155). The words for the compound hipbone are hype and ban, and the genitive case of handwurmes along with the overall comparative context suggests that this is the correct surface meaning of the word. But interestingly, there is a verb, hupeban, in Old English (sometimes also spelled hupian) which means to retreat, or retire. Thus the secondary meaning of the word hupeban reinforces the incremental shrinking of the tumor, and the performer of this charm uses linguistic resources to accomplish a magical purpose.

Turning to the next much longer and more complex charm, we see that while the wen charm uses words to reduce an entity to nothing, the following charm, which Storms calls Field Ceremonies, uses words and prescribes physical actions to banish the negative effects of sorcery from the land in order to promote growth.

Banishing Sorcery from the Land

The Old English charm to ensure fertile land is powerfully enriched by a complex performance schema in which various participants, language registers, symbolic objects and actions are incorporated. Since my purpose here is to focus on performance elements, not individual words, I provide only Storms' English translation of the charm. The full Anglo-Saxon charm is available in Storms (1975, p. 172-177).

Field Ceremonies

From the MS. Cotton Caligula A. vii. (in Storms, 1975; p. 172).

- 1 Here is the remedy by which you can improve your fields, if they will not grow properly, or if any harm has been done to them by sorcery or witchcraft. Take, then, at night before daybreak four sods from 5 four sides of the land and mark how they stood before. Then take oil and honey and yeast and milk of all the cattle that are on the land, and part of every kind of tree growing on the land, except hard trees, and part of every well-known herb, except burdock only, and pour 10 holy water on them, and then let it drip three times on the bottom of the sods.

And then say these words:

Crescite, grow, et multiplicamini, and multiply, et replete, and fill, terram, the earth. In nomine 15 patris et filii et spiritus sancti sitis benedicti.

And (say) Our Father as often as the other.

And afterwards carry the sods to church and have a priest sing four masses over the sods, and turn green sides to the altar. And afterwards, take the sods back
 20 to where they stood before, before the setting of the sun.

And he must have four crosses made of 'quickbeam' (aspewnwood) and let him write on the end of each: Mattheus and Marcus, Lucas and Johannes. Lay the cross at the bottom of the pit (made by cutting away the sods).

25 Say then:

Crux Matheus. Crux Marcus. Crux Lucas.
Crux Sanctus Johannes.

Then take the sods and lay them on the crosses and say then nine times these words:

30 Eastwards I stand, for favours I pray.
 I pray the great Lord, I pray the mighty prince.
 I pray the Holy Guardian of the Heavenly Kingdom.
 Earth I pray and sky,
 and the true Holy Mary,
 35 and heaven's might and high hall,
 that by the grace of the Lord
 I may pronounce this charm, by my firm will
 raise up these crops to our worldly benefit,
 fill this earth by firm faith,
 40 make beautiful these grasslands, as the prophet said
 that he would have favors on earth
 who dealt out alms judicially, according to
 the will of the Lord.

Then turn three times with the course of the sun, then
 45 stretch yourself along the ground and say the litany there. And say then Sanctus Sanctus Sanctus to the end. Sing then Benedicite with arms outstretched and Magnificat and Our Father three times. And commend the land to Christ and Holy Mary, and to the Holy Rood in
 50 praise and worship and to the benefit of the owner of the land and all those who are subject to him.
 When all this is done, then take unknown seed from beggars and give them twice as much as you take from them. And collect all the plowing implements together,
 55 bore a hole in the plow-tail and put incense and fennel and hallowed soap and hallowed salt in it. Then take the seed and place it on the body of the plow. Say then:

Erce, Erce, Erce, mother of earth,
 may the omnipotent eternal Lord grant you

60 fields growing and thriving,
flourishing and bountiful,
bright shafts of millet crops,
and of broad barley crops,
and of white wheat crops,
65 and of all the crops of the earth.
May the eternal Lord grant him,
and his saints who are in heaven,
that his produce may be safe against every
foe,
and secure against every harm
70 from witchcraft sown throughout the land.
Now I pray the Sovereign Who created this
world
that no woman may be so eloquent, and no man
so powerful
that they can upset the words thus spoken.

When you drive forth the plow and cut the first furrow,
say then:

75 Hail to thee, earth, mother of men,
 may you be fruitful under God's protection
 filled with food for the benefit of men.

Then take flour of every kind and have a loaf baked as big as the palm of your hand, and knead it with milk 80 and with holy water, and lay it under the first furrow.
Say then:

85 Field full of food for the race of man
 brightly blooming, be thou blessed
 in the holy name of Him Who created heaven
 and the earth on which we live.
 The God who made this earth
 grant us the gift of fertility
 that each grain may be profitable to us.

90 And say three times: Crescite. In Nomine patris sitis
benedicti, Amen. And (say) Our Father three times.

As Storms' title suggests, Field Ceremonies gives evidence of a far greater degree of performance complexity than the charm Against Wens. Sebeok (1964), speaking of charm performance in general, identified a narrator, an audience, and a crucial context, all of which influenced performance. Niles (1980) identified the context as communal

as opposed to individual, while Nelson (1984) posited a double audience: one explicit (the magical objects and sacred entities directly addressed) and one implicit (the community and the charm performer indirectly addressed).

The complexity of Field Ceremonies provides further opportunity for the identification of magical performance elements. These can include writing or inscribing symbols or text in a particular manner, the method of verbal delivery, the incorporation of magically and symbolically significant objects, and accompanying physical action.

In Field Ceremonies, four crosses must be each inscribed with the names of the four gospelers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The physical act of writing or inscribing symbols or text in a particular manner serves to externalize the charm performer's intent, which is to gather power to banish sorcery from the land. Merrifield (1987) tells us that the use of letters to represent sounds is a widely acknowledged act of magical empowerment for it both focuses and reinforces the translation of the performer's will into magical reality. This was certainly true for the Anglo-Saxons, for whom letters symbolized magical maxims (Guinn, 1959).

For example, the magical notion that the infinite is present within the finite (see Pennick, 1992, p. 4) is illustrated by writing because systems of letters are usually small, yet they can be used to generate an infinite amount of language. The Hermetic Maxim, "as above, so

below," is also symbolized in the act of writing, for the same microcosmic relations that exist between letters also function in the larger macrocosm of language. Furthermore, the act of writing illustrates the integrative nature of magic summarized in the Law of Association. Just as the metaphorical properties of language require shared schema to impart meaning, letters--the visible signs used to represent our language--also symbolize concepts, abstract properties, whole webs of interconnected ideas, but only within a consensual format (Gombrich, 1966).

Nigel Pennick (1992, p. 2), when speaking about the magicality of writing, reminds us that it "can also express non-verbal experiences that can alter one's consciousness drastically." Contemplating the esoteric properties of the letters we use to write can "change the direction of flow of one's mind, diverting it into new and unexpected channels." Thus the act of inscription helps translate magical intent into performance by allowing the charm performer an avenue of physical behavior to parallel and reinforce the verbal and intentional devices used to perform magic. It provides yet another means to focus the spiritual energy of the charm performer.

Another element of magical performance is the method of verbal delivery of the magical language. This can include rhythmic chanting, a marked volume (either high or low), and formalized diction. Field Ceremonies includes no directions related to pitch or stress, but the text of the charm

concretely shows that the verbal delivery is accomplished in two languages: one is the approved language register for spiritual matters in the newly established Christian church, the other is Old English, the time-honored language of pagan magic. During this time of transition, the first invocation to the earth is done in a parallel register: first Latin, then Old English.

The next two invocatory passages also alternate between delivery in Latin and Anglo-Saxon. The Latin invocation to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John is brief, but of immense magical power, for it draws upon the symbolic potency of the four gospels and their crosses. Although it contains some Christian elements, the Anglo-Saxon invocation which follows contains many pagan references. It invokes the earth and the sky, refers back to the "high hall" of the Teutonic Gods, states that it is a charm, and acknowledges the will of the charm performer. The next three invocations, clearly of ancient provenance, are in Anglo-Saxon and appeal to "Erce, Erce, Erce," an earthen mother.² Yet the parity of the spiritual traditions is reestablished by giving Latin the "last word." The charm ends with a Latin invocation, a Latin benediction, and the Our Father, a Christian prayer.

The alternation of language is one way in which performance furthers the intention of the charm performer. Here one intent is to honor both spiritual paradigms so as to gather power from both sources and the charm performer

could be expected to realize this intent through the method of delivery.

Another element of magical performance which Field Ceremonies illustrates is the incorporation of magically and symbolically significant objects.³ To perform this charm of vital importance to the performer and the community at large, special formulaic language must be used, and accompanying it is the manipulation of significant objects. The accessories which symbolize fertility include sod from the four corners of the land, oil, honey, yeast, and milk from the beasts on the land, and parts of every plant on the land (except hardwoods and burdock).⁴ Holy water, crosses made of "quickbeam,"⁵ seed from the land and seed from unknown beggars, the plow, incense, fennel, hallowed soap and salt also contribute symbolic significance as crucial elements of performance in this charm. Finally, by baking and then "planting" a loaf of bread in the field, the charmer makes a statement through performance. Since this is the best of all possible loaves of bread, one which contains "every kind of flour," and is made with milk and holy water, the performance says, "Give me back what I have given to you. Give me back your very best."

Along with the incorporation of physical objects, appropriate accompanying physical action is also an important performance element. In magical practice, physical action is performed, not to accomplish the intent directly, but as a symbolic reinforcement of the charm

performer's intent. The physical action serves to focus the energy of the charmer upon the magical task at hand. In this charm, taking sods from the land and anointing them with obvious symbols of abundance (oil, honey and yeast), is a sympathetic magical act, conforming to the magical rule that like influences like. By pouring symbols of abundance on pieces of the land, the charm performer hopes to make reality correspond: the entirety of the fields will also be flooded with abundance.

Likewise, objects from the living creatures of the land, milk from the cattle, pieces of the trees and herbs are blessed with holy water, magically encouraging the real creatures on the land itself to thrive. Both the Christian and the pagan magical potency of the cross is placed in direct physical contact with the sods.⁶ This follows the magical Law of Contagion, which holds that objects (or their symbolic "proxies") once placed in physical contact will continue to retain a physical connection (see Frazier, 1922, Bonewits, 1970). Thus the charm clearly intended, as Niles suggests, for performance by a whole community, involves multiple performance elements - calling upon the magic of spoken and written words and upon physical acts that place the human beings who depend on their mother earth for their sustenance into a right relationship with her.

The next charm to be analyzed here is also involved with growth and the continuation of life, and it also incorporates symbolic objects and appropriate accompanying

physical performance. This charm is especially interesting because it combines both banishing and binding intents in a single formulaic utterance in order to ensure a happy pregnancy, delivery, and nursing period.

Banishing Sorrow and Binding Strength In An
Anglo-Saxon Birthing Charm

The Anglo-Saxon birthing charm below was intended to insure a healthy and happy delivery. Miscarriage, stillbirth, and birth defects must be banished, while the infant must be simultaneously bound to the womb for an appropriate period of gestation. The mother, who might need this charm because she has had miscarriages in the past, must also banish her sorrow in order to have a healthy and happy pregnancy. Positive elements, such as the ability to nurse and the infant's strength, must also be summoned and bound to the circumstances at hand.

The Charm Wip Misbyrde: Against Misbirth

From the Harley Ms. 585, in Storms, G. Anglo Saxon Magic (1975). Folcroft Library Editions Centrale Drukkerij N.V., Nijmegen, p. 196.

- 1 Se wifman se hire cild afedan ne maeg, gange to
 gewitenes mannes birgenne and staeppe þonne priwa
 ofer þa byrgenne, and cweþe þonne priwa þas word:
 Þis is me to bote þære lapan laetbyrde.
- 5 þis me to bote þære swaeran swaertbyrde,
 þis me to bote þære lapan lambyrde.
 And þonne þaet wif seo mid bearne and heo to hyre
 hlaforde
 on reste ga, þonne cweþe heo:
- 10 Up ic gonge, ofer þe staeppe
 mid cwican cilde, nalaes mid cwellendum.
 mid fulborenum, nalaes mid faegan.

And þonne seo modor gefele þaet þaet bearn si cwic, ga

þonne to cyrican, and þonne heo toferan þan weofode
cume, cweþe þonne:

Criste, ic saede, þis gecyped.

- 15 Se wifmon se hyre bearn afedan ne maege, genime heo
sylf
hyre agenes cildes gebyrgenne dæl, wry æfter þonne on
blace
wulle and bebiċge to cepemannum. And cweþe þonne:

Ic hit bebiċge, ge hit bebiċgan,
þas sweartan wulle and pysse sorge corn.

- 20 Se man se ne maege bearn afedan, nime þonne anes
bleos cu
meoluc on hyre handae, and gesupe þonne mid hyre muþe,
gange
þonne to yrnendum waetere and spiwe þaer in þa meolc.
And hlade þonne mid þaere ylcan hand þaes waeteres mud
fulne and forswelge. Cweþe þonne þas word:

- 25 Gehwer ferde ic me þone maeran maga þihtan,
mid pysse maeran mete þihtan.
þone ic me wille habban and ham gan.

þonne heo to þan broce ga no beseo heo, no ne eft
þonne heo þanan ga, and þonne ga heo in oþer hus oþer
heo ut ofeode

- 30 and þaer gebyrge metes.

Against Misbirth

- 1 That woman who her child may not bring forth, must
go to
a dead man's grave and step then thrice
over the grave, and quoth then thrice these words:

- 5 This is to help me for hated latebirth.
this is to help me for sad stillbirth
this is to help me for hated lamebirth.

And when that woman be with child and she to her lord
and to her rest goes, then quoth she:

- 10 Up I go, over thee step
with quick child, not with quelled one
with fullborn, not with fated

And when the mother feels that the bairn be quick, go
then to church and when she opposite the altar comes,

quoth then:

15 Christ, I said, this performed.

That woman who may not bring forth her bairn, take
herself
of her own child's grave a part; wrap it afterward in
black
wool and sell it to merchants. And quoth then:

20 I it sell, ye it sell
this sad wool and this sorrowful seed.

The one who may not nourish a bairn, take then milk
from a one
colored cow in her hand, and sip then with her mouth,
and go
then to running water and spew therein the milk. And
draw
then with the same hand a mouthful of the water
25 and swallow. Quoth then these words:

Everywhere I took me this fine powerful strong
one
from this fine food strong.
then I me will have and go home.

When she to the brook goes, let her not look about her,
nor
30 after when she from thence goes, and then let her go in
another house than she left from and there take food.

As in Field Ceremonies, the performance elements in
this charm include symbolic objects: earth from a child's
grave, black wool, milk, and running water. Here, too,
accompanying physical performance reinforces the charm
performer's intent. In the charm Against Misbirth, physical
acts include stepping over a man's grave (Lines 3-4), and
over a living man in his bed (line 9), going to a church and
standing opposite the altar (line 13), selling "sorrowful
seed" to wandering merchants (line 18),⁷ drinking and
spitting milk (lines 23-24), drinking water (line 25),
confining one's gaze (line 29), and eating food in a strange

house (line 31). This charm illustrates how the non-verbal acts of physical performance are paralleled by verbal acts of performance.

Nelson (1985) identified no less than five pairs of physical and speech acts in this charm:

- I. Step over grave / Speak incantation in lines 4-6.
- II. Step over husband / Speak incantation in lines 9-11.
- III. Go to church / Speak incantation on line 15.
- IV. Wrap and sell "sorrowful seed" / Speak incantation in lines 19-20.
- V. Spew milk, drink water / Speak incantation in lines 26-28.⁸

The linguistic theory of speech acts was introduced by J.L. Austin (1962) and later developed by John Searle (1969, 1979), Holdcroft (1978), Vanderveken (1990), and others. This theory of speech performance can effectively illustrate how words and actions are inextricably bound in the magical language of charms. Austin called verbs which perform an action in the saying of the word, and whose force is contained within the verb itself, performatives. Austin identified these performative verbs as typically conjugated in the first person singular, indicative, active form, present tense.

In this charm, some language intended to change the physical world appears in tense and person configurations which conform to Austin's maxim, yet other incantatory language here does not. In line 11, for example, we see the present doing double duty for a future event when the charmer states that she carries a "fullborn" child, meaning one she will carry to term. Just as the present tense can

serve to focus magical power in the future, in line 15 we see how an assertive in the preterit is used to turn the present. When the charmer goes into the church and stands opposite the altar, it is her past-tense utterance which is expected to alter the present: "Christ, I said, this performed."

Lines 26-28 constitute a very interesting use of tense in performatives, for the first two lines are in the preterit ("Everywhere I took me this fine powerful strong one, from this fine food strong . . .") and the last line appears to be in the future tense, although in Anglo-Saxon this tense is extremely rare ("then I me will have and go home").⁹ The context of this charm is such that the moment the utterance is completed, whether in the present, future, or the preterit tense, it has successfully taken effect. Thus, the charmer encircles all contingencies in one literally time-encompassing assertion.

Bach and Harnish (1979) and Recanati (1987) have suggested that in utterances which do not conform to the performative verb profile of first person, present tense, indicative, the performative is implicit, rather than explicit. Thus the performative language of the explicit past tense utterance, "Christ, I said, this performed" would be contained in an implicit assertion in the first-person indicative: "I assert [first person, present tense, indicative] that Christ performed this."

The difficulty with this explanation is that the determination of the precise implicit performative can be problematic (I assert/I promise/I believe, etc.). Furthermore, tense conflicts between the implicit performative in the present and the explicit magical language in the preterit or future tenses can compromise the propositional integrity of the utterance (ex.: [I assert that] "Christ, I said, this performed"). In any case, our discussion will illustrate that charms often contain the past and future as well as the present tense in the propositional content of their incantatory language.

Subsequent work in speech acts also acknowledges the difficulty in distinguishing between constative or "locutionary" statements, which merely state something, and performative or "illocutionary" statements, which do something. Filho (1984, p. 24) states that "there is a sense in which all utterances are performative--whenever anyone speaks there are many different things of many different sorts that he could be said to thereby do."

Indeed, speaking can accomplish many different things, and one distinction which Austin made in his lectures continues to fascinate linguists today. Aside from the original categories of locutionary acts and illocutionary acts, Austin also recognized a third type of utterance: perlocutionary acts. These he said contained all the components of both locutionary and illocutionary acts with an additional perlocutionary consequence. The Anglo-Saxon

charm Against Misbirth illustrates how the charm performer uses illocutionary statements to produce an extra, perlocutionary result.

The first example of perlocutionary consequence occurs in lines 4-6. Here the speaker makes locutionary statements about the charm's application. Yet these locutionary statements are also illocutionary assertions that the charm is valuable and will work. Since this is magical language, making an assertion entails an additional perlocutionary consequence: the attention and energy of the charmer are focused on the end result, which is the means by which magical success is ensured.

Again in lines 9-11, the locutionary utterance informs the hearer of a state or condition:

Up I go, over thee step
With quick child, not with quelled one
With fullborn, not with fated.

Yet we also know that the same statement in the appropriate context can also be an assertion, an illocutionary utterance designed to affirm the charm performer's ability to ensure a good pregnancy. In fact, the the charm performer's statement would be interpreted by many scholars to contain an implicit performative: "[I assert that] I step over thee with quick child, not with quelled one. . . ." Again, the magical language has a perlocutionary consequence beyond the conventional force of the assertion. When the charmer asserts that she carries a healthy baby, an additional result occurs: the attention and energy of the charmer are

focused on the goal, in the hopes that it will translate into successful magical action.

By stating "I sell it, you sell it" the charmer's assertion entails the additional perlocutionary consequence of magical transference. With the appropriate accompanying physical actions, she ensures that the possibility of a "sad, sorrowful seed" is literally removed from her sphere of possibilities.

In the preceding discussion, we have seen how semantic resonance, performance elements, and speech acts worked in three Anglo-Saxon charms that banished unwanted elements: a wen, or tumor; the ill effects of negative forces on the land; and threats to the life of an unborn child. We turn now to the charm that Godfrid Storms titled For a Swarm of Bees (1975, p. 133). The purpose of this charm is to bind a swarm of bees to a farmer's field and prevent the hive from relocating in the woods, where it would be difficult to find and take the honey.

Binding the Bees

By including For A Swarm Of Bees in his anthology of metrical charms, Dobbie (1942) recognized the important role of its rhythm, as did Storms (1975, p. 132), who also commented on its alliterative pattern and called Wip Ymbe "one of the finest Anglo-Saxon charms that have come down to us." This charm is of ancient popular provenance, is fully pagan, and although bee hives may appear to be less

important than fertile land to the modern reader, it is well to remember that honey was the Anglo-Saxons' only sweetener, and that it was a vital component in many medicines. Honey was also a crucial ingredient in mead, a much-loved beverage in those times.

Wip Ymbe: Charm Against Bees

Corpus Christi College 41, Cambridge, 11th Century, in Storms, G. Anglo Saxon Magic (1975). Folcroft Library Editions Centrale Drukkerij N.V., Nijmegen, p. 132.

Nim eorpan, oferweorp mid pinre swiþran handa under
 þinum
 swiþran fet and cweð:

5 Fo ic under fot, funde ic hit
 Hwaet, eorde maeg wið ealra wihta gehwilce,
 and wið andan and wið aeminde,
 and wið þa micelan mannes tungan.

And siððon forweorp ofer greot þonne hi swirman, and
 cweð:
 Sitte ge, sigewif, sigað to eorpan.
 Naevre ge wilde to wuda fleogan.
 10 Beo ge swa gemindige mines godes
 swa bið manna gehwilc metes and eþeles.

Charm For A Swarm Of Bees

1 Take earth, throw it over you with your right hand
 under your right foot and say:
 I grasp it underfoot; I found it.
 Lo, earth powers over all creatures the while
 5 And against enmity and against jealousy
 And against the mighty tongues of men.

And then throw grit over them when they swarm and say:
 Sit, ye siegewives, sink to earth.
 Never ye wild to the wood fly.
 10 Be ye so mindful of my goods
 As is every man of food and home.

This charm begins with a brief performance instruction in prose which, although it is crucial, does not constitute part of magical language. That begins when the charmer affirms dominance over the earth, which itself "powers" over

all creatures. Thus in order for the charmer to have any sway with bees, it is necessary to derive authority from the earth herself. In what would, in another context, be the mere statement of a fact, here the charmer actually seizes control over the power of the earth through action (grasping and flinging the earth) and parallel affirmation: "I grasp it under foot; I found it." The earth's superior powers are then enumerated: it "powers against all creatures. . . ." It is stronger than enmity, jealousy, and other magical language. Thus in the first four lines the charmer binds him or herself to the power of the earth; a power which will then be directed toward the bees.

After a second prose instruction, the charm contains another four-line incantation. This one is intended to bind the bees to the keeper. When we look closely at the Anglo-Saxon text, we see that both binding the power and then binding the bees are reinforced on the phonemic level. Holland (1968, p. 146) asserted that repetition of certain sounds can provide a feeling of dominance over the meanings which the sounds represent and Nelson (1985) illustrated how alliteration and assonance could enhance cohesion in charms.

Here the familiar alliterative pattern of Anglo-Saxon poetry provides cohesion throughout, both in the preparative portion, where links to the earth's power are established, and the incantatory segment, wherein the bees are bound. It allows sound concordance in an initial-stress language with numerous word-final variation due to case and number

inflections. Moreover, alliteration provides a "bridge" across the pause, or caesura, linking the two-stress dimeters on either side and creating the traditional Anglo-Saxon tetrameter. The effect is highly formal and dignified, and sounds "rather like chanting to a 4/8 musical tempo" (Chickering, 1989; p. 31).¹⁰ The key to alliteration is the beginning sound of the third stressed syllable in the tetrameter. This sound determines the alliteration of one or both preceding stress words. For example, in line 3, the third stress in the tetrameter is the first syllable of funde, which begins with /f/. The beginning /f/ sound in funde alliterates with the initial sounds in fo and fot:

/ / / /
Fo ic under fot, funde ic hit

Notice that the alliterating words are the three most important words in the initial affirmation, i.e., fo (grasp), fot (foot), and funde (found).

Dobbie recognized how alliteration provides sound concordance and links across the caesura in this charm; in fact, that led to his choice to include it in his twelve metrical charms. Yet alliteration also serves a special function in The Charm Against Bees: It provides a vehicle for onomatopoeic sound imitation which binds the intent of the charmer to the task at hand. For example, in the second, incantatory segment of the charm the alliterative pattern in the command is /s/, and we cannot but notice the imitative properties of this fricative in a charm addressed to bees:

/ / /
sitte ge, sigewif, sigað to eorþan.

Although the alliterative properties of this charm have previously been recognized by Storms, Dobbie, and others, perhaps what is less obvious is the way in which the vowels collaborate on the most minute physical level to reinforce the intent and the action of the speaker. The bees, remember, are swarming, and the charmer must throw some previously consecrated dirt over them while exhorting them to sink to earth. The movement of the vowels from high to mid to low (i > ε > a) in this command directly parallel the actions required of the bees; i.e., that they "sink down." The trochaic metrical pattern also contributes to the sensation: the stress "sinks" from initial stress to weak stress, where it remains for another beat. This sinking stress pattern is repeated identically three times in the charm's command, and is, in each instance, linked to an important element in the imperative: 1) sit (an imperative verb) 2) siegewives (the creatures ordered to obey) 3) sink (an imperative verb).

Up to now, this discussion has focused on acknowledged charms and argued for an analysis of their poetic elements based on three factors: their inclusion in Dobbie's Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, their adherence to metrical conventions as defined by Chatman (1968), Halsall (1981), and Frederick Jones (1967), and the tradition of appropriating the terminology of poetry to discuss Anglo-Saxon charms (Rodrigues, 1993; Storms, 1975). Now we shall

turn to something different, for unlike those charms of popular provenance previously discussed, the following elegaic passage, which critics have chosen to call "The Lay Of The Last Survivor" (Greenfield, 1969; 1982), comes down to us in the literary context of Beowulf. In it the last survivor of a warrior nation conceals the weapons and treasure of his lost people, and recites a spell to keep them undisturbed.

Binding Treasure in Beowulf

The Lay of the Last Survivor

MS. Cott. Vitellius A. XV, in Klaeber, FR., Beowulf And The Fight At Finnsburg. (1950). Boston: D.C. Heath And Company, p. 85.

- Heald þu nu, hruse, nu hæleð ne mostan,
 eorla æhte! Hwæt, hyt ær on ðe
 gode begeaton; guðdeað fornam,
 2250 feorhbealo frecne fyra gehwylcne
 leoda minra þara ðe þis [lif] ofgeaf,
 gesawon seledream. Nah, hwa sweord wege
 oppe fe(o)r(mie) fæted wæge,
 dryncfæt deore; dug(uð) ellor s[c]eoc.
 2255 Sceal se hearda helm (hyr)stedgolde,
 fætum befeallen; feormynd swefað
 þa ðe beadogriman bywan sceoldan;
 ge swylce seo herepad, sio æt hilde gebad,
 ofer borda gebræc bite irena,
 2260 broснаð æfter beorne. Ne mæg byrnan hring
 æfter wigfruman wide feran,
 hæleðum be healfe. Næs hearpan wyn,
 gomen gleobeames, ne god hafoc
 geond sæl swingeð, ne se swifta mearh
 2265 burhstede beateð. Bealocwealm hafað
 fela feorhcynna forð onsended!

The Lay of the Last Survivor

- Hold thou, now, earth, what heroes could not:
 The wealth of earls! Lo, from thee they obtained it
 Then battle-death took them, fearful and baleful
 2250 Took all of my people, took from them their hall-joys
 Took from them their life.

None have I now to carry the sword
 To polish the goblet, the drinking-cup dear.
 They have all gone.
 2255 Now shall the hard helm, wrought out in gold
 Surrender its plating; the burnishers sleep
 Who would shine the battle-mask,
 And likewise the warcoat that in valor withstood
 The breaking of boards, the biting of iron
 2260 It decays with the man. The byrnies ring not
 On the warmaker; they fare not wide
 By the heroes' side. No harper's joy
 No gleeman's gladness, and no good hawk
 Swings through the hall.
 2265 No swift mare the courtyard clatters
 Bale-killing hath sent forth all of my life-kin.

The poetic properties of this passage are universally recognized (Ayers, 1933; Bonjour, 1950; Chambers, 1932). From a literary perspective we can immediately recognize the undercurrent of grief which qualifies it as an elegy, and the ironic tone of the first line, which illustrates the notion that all wealth and victory become dust in the end. The challenge in the upcoming discussion is to see The Lay from a magical perspective and to show, through examination of the rhythm, rhyme, and sound symbolism the Beowulf poet uses, that it is more than poetry; it is an incantation--a high-intensity binding charm--embedded within a poem. In fact, due to the sound associations in The Lay, the last survivor is able to give a magical idea--that through sheer force of language and will it is possible to bind treasure to the earth--a shape in the material world.

To re-state the essential features, Old English poetry derives from the use of a four-stress metrical structure (Bliss, 1962; Pope, 1981; Sisam, 1953). Each four-stress line is further subdivided into two dimeters, each with two

beats, and between the two halves of each line is a sharp pause, or cæsura,¹¹ wherein the flow of sound is broken by the ending of a word within a foot.

Within the normative four-stress metrical pattern, the Lay of the Last Survivor contains an unusual amount of variation in the metrical types defined by Sievers (1893). Klaeber (1950, p. lxix) recognized that the rhythmical variations in lines 2247-2266, which he called simply "the elegy," made it "quite expressive." While it is, perhaps, over-subjective to attempt to assign emotional content to elements of meter, I agree with Klaeber that it is possible to discern echoes of the effect these metrical forms may have had on the hearer.

The a-dimeter of line 2248 for example, has the least amount of syllables possible for Sievers' metrical type A:

/ x / x
eorla æhte

This lends it a "slow, mournful movement" which even modern hearers of Beowulf can recognize. Again in line 2253, a feeling of "eagerness checked or excitement held in suspense" is generated by type C (x / / x) of the first dimeter, which tells of the quick, yet constrained movement involved in polishing a drinking cup. This sound pattern works in opposition to the second dimeter of line 2253, which, with its simple A type meter, summons a feeling of "quiet strength" in denoting the heavy drinking cup itself.

2253 C,A

x	x	/		/		/	x		/	x
CONJ	V					ADJ		N		
Oppe	<u>f</u> e(o)r(mie)					<u>f</u> ated		wæge,		
Or	polish					plated		cup		

In these and numerous other instances in this passage, the opposition of metrical types enhances power by reinforcing the meaning in the meter.

Although four stresses per line are the norm, in the first line we also see hypermetricality in the unusual spondee metrical foot beginning line 2247.¹² This anomalous hypermetrical pattern contains three stresses in the first dimeter preceding the caesura, which allows the speaker to stress both the command (Heald) and the command's addressee (both þu and the appositive hruse). This hypermetricality makes the line "seem somewhat aloof and oracular" (Pope, 1981 p. 132), setting the language apart by diverging from the normal metrical pattern.

Following Pope and Klaeber, then, we are able to hear some of the suggestive power of rhythm in the words of the Last Survivor. Let us now consider the onomatopoeic and suggestive capabilities of sound symbolism in this passage.

On a directly imitative level, a preponderance of voiced bilabial stops infuses the sounds of destruction and violence into the lament for kinsmen destroyed in battle. In order to articulate a stop, one must "do violence" to the air flow by abruptly impeding it with completely closed lips; rather like dealing it a blow. This manner of articulation produces a very strong, decisive sound, which, when voiced, carries even more power. Within the context of

this utterance, words beginning with /b/ are directly related to the instruments, carnage and devastation of war:

Line 2256	<u>befeallen</u>	"be deprived"	(helmets losing their plating)
Line 2257	<u>beadogriman</u> <u>bywan</u>	"battle mask" "prepare"	(preparation of the instruments of war)
Line 2258	<u>(ge)bad</u>	"withstood"	(standing fast in battle)
Line 2259	<u>borda</u> <u>(ge)brac</u>	"(of) boards" "break"	(spears) (breaking of spears)
	<u>bite</u>	"bite"	(the bite of iron)
Line 2260	<u>brosnað</u>	"decays"	(the warrior and his armor are now decaying)
	<u>beorne</u> <u>byrnan</u>	"warrior" "byrnie"	
Line 2265	<u>burhstede</u> <u>beateð</u> <u>bealocwealm</u>	"castle courtyard" "beats" "bale-killing"	

On the level of suggestion, sound symbolism also empowers the language here, associating combinations of sounds with ideas to heighten emotional and magical awareness. In the first line of the Last Survivor's speech, for example, the dominant alliterative pattern is determined by the voiceless glottal fricative /h/ in the word hæleð, which alliterates with the beginning consonants both of the command (Heald) and the addressee (hruse) in the first dimeter, which are preceding stress words.¹³ The alliteration here makes connections between words on either side of the cæsurā, and it also creates an important link between the intent of the speaker and his articulation of

that intent because it involves the magical properties of breath.

Alice Bailey (1951, p. 151) maintains that exhalation in meditative magic drives the thought-form from the body and "sends it forth to do its work and fulfill its mission." Here the Last Survivor pronounces the glottal fricative by expelling breath from the back of the throat outward. In conformance with the magical Law of Association, this method of articulation parallels and thus reinforces the performer's magical intent, focusing his power "with thought and conscious purpose" on three main elements in this binding charm. They are: the act of holding (Heald) in the earth (hruse) something of the essence of a lost race (hæleð).

Occasionally both the imitative and suggestive properties of sound symbolism are used in the same line. The consonant-glide combination sw occurs twice in line 2264:

geond sæl swingeð, ne se swifta mearh,

Within the prescribed parameters of this utterance, the sound symbolism of swingeð may imitate the sound of a hawk moving rapidly through the air. The word swifta in the second dimeter, however, suggests the image of flight in the description of a war horse: one which is powerful, impatient, and swift. Here the sw combination suggests that the animal is fleet as the wind, and will "fly" over the land with the speed of a bird on the wing.

Because of its proximity, we associate the suggestion of rapid movement through the air with the last line of the lay, which speaks of the slaughter which "sent forth" the Last Survivor's people. A dynamic of opposition is at work here as well, for the images of swift flight--of hawks, mares, and "life-kin"--are in opposition to the binding intent of the charm, which seeks to hold the treasure fast. This juxtaposition of opposites empowers both concepts through their polarity, thus further strengthening the charm.

Thus The Lay of the Last Survivor qualifies as a high intensity binding charm because in thought, word, and deed, it seeks to accomplish a magical act. The magical intent of the Last Survivor is of high intensity and seeks to bind, for its purpose is to establish a connection between two elements of the Last Survivor's reality: relics and the earth. His intent is verbalized in a formulaic utterance using words which, through the poetic tools of rhythm, alliteration, and sound symbolism, reinforce and translate the binding intent into reality. Although the Beowulf text does not tell us if the Last Survivor makes use of symbolic objects or actions in his physical performance, since this passage occurs within an epic poem, we know that the manner of verbal delivery sets it apart from ordinary communication.

On a literary level the charm acknowledges that wealth is transitory and that the relics themselves will decay: the

helmet cannot keep its gold plating; the coat of mail, its links once bound together in intricately linked circles of metal, now moulders; the men themselves could not hold their wealth. Yet on a magical level, the Last Survivor, who speaks the words, "Hold thou, now earth . . ." does create something which will endure. The sounds of his words bind their meaning, even as the words themselves bind the treasure to the earth.

Conclusion

In order to explain how five Anglo-Saxon charms work, I have drawn upon linguistic and poetic theory to demonstrate the ways in which the components of thought, word, and deed heighten the magical power of the charm performer. In the charm Against Wens, semantic resonance reinforces the charmer's intent by incorporating numerous sub-strata of meaning through the manipulation of similar-sounding words and double meanings.

The charm Storms called Field Ceremonies illustrates how physical deeds can help to make a charm work. The act of inscription focuses energies upon the magical act, while the alternation of Old English and Latin encircles two magical traditions, bringing their power to the task at hand. Incorporating symbolic objects in performance acts as a statement on the physical plane. When this "statement" parallels those made through language, a doubly strong articulation of magical intent occurs.

With the charm Against Misbirth we see a performer acting both by means of physical movement and meaningful utterance, while the charms Against Bees and the "Lay of the Last Survivor" illustrate William Schuyler's claim that since language in general and charms in particular are representational, the use of sound association patterns is crucial to the charm's success (1982, p. 242). Rhythm must be appropriate to the meaning, rhyme must provide cohesion, and sound symbolism in both its imitative and suggestive capacities invokes the Law of Association, thereby increasing the charm's effectiveness.

As we will see in Chapter Three, the language used to banish and bind may drastically change, but the underlying components which make charms work display a remarkable continuity. The lexicon may vary, rhythm and rhyming styles can be set aside only to be revived later, yet semantic resonance, rhythm and rhyme, and sound symbolism all continue to empower the banishing and binding intents of charm performers.

Notes

1. Elfshot pertains to herbivores and is probably an overextended belly caused by excessive feasting on the delectable green grasses of early spring. Cockayne (1864) quotes Carr's Craven Glossary (Vol.II, p. 401):

"When cattle are swollen they are said to be degbowed. I have frequently known a farmer to strike a sharp knife between the ribs and the hips, when the cow felt immediate relief from the escape of air through the orifice, so that the distended carcass instantly collapsed, and the excrements blown with great violence to the roof of the cow-house."

2. This passage addressed to mother earth, as well as lines 30 - 35, which pray to God and Mary in heaven, as well as the earth and sky itself, illustrate that there is usually no substantive difference between charms and what are normally recognized as prayers. All formulaic utterances which translate a specific magical intent into reality through prescribed articulation and physical performance strategies are analysed as charms in this text, whether they address Christian deities, earth mothers, or bees. Occasionally people extemporize to deities, as when Saint Teresa chided her creator after taking a spill from a carriage: "It's no wonder you have so few friends, Lord, the way you treat them!" This utterance did not have a specific magical intent; it was spontaneous, non-formulaic, and communicative in nature. It had no aural properties to set it apart from non-magical speech, nor did it incorporate any magical performance strategies. Utterances like this do address a deity, but they are not charms.

3. For an excellent discussion of magical practices and objects, see Planer (1988), Superstition.

4. Niles (1980) suggests that hardwoods were exempted because they did not play a direct part in the agricultural cycle.

4. This has variously been interpreted to refer to either the aspen or the rowan, but we should remember that the term itself merely means "living wood."

5. The complete intermingling of pagan and Christian referents in this charm culminates by requiring not only the approbation of the Church, but the active participation of a priest--one of its authorized representatives.

6. Although the applications and contexts are different, note again the ubiquitous metaphor of the "sorrowful seed," which must here be banished as it was in Field Ceremonies.

7. The last two physical actions, confining one's gaze and taking food in a strange house, are not accompanied by verbal acts. I suggest that this is because the charm has already been completed with the last incantation. Those two suggestions for appropriate behavior after the charm's performance seem to be cautionary measures designed to protect the integrity of the completed charm.

9. The traditional interpretation of the verb willan in Old English is "to wish," but its syntactic positioning in this sentence justifies an interpretation of it as a future tense marker.

10. There are other patterns of alliteration in Anglo-Saxon poetry besides the most common one, a a :a x, which I have mentioned here. See Pope (1981) p. 102-105 for a more complete inquiry into the various permutations of alliteration in Old English verse.

11. Pope (1981) argued that the cæsura was not discernible since rhythm is an aural rather than a visual phenomenon, and the cæsura is a visual editorial convention: a space between two verses. I see (and hear) the cæsura as a legitimate aural component, for it represents a discernable ending of a word within a metric foot.

12. I am aware that Bliss (1962, p. 154) does not categorize this line as hypermetric. He sees this line as being composed of two type A verses with this basic stress type:
/ x / x

13. In the text, this /h/ sound is symbolized by the letter h, which was pronounced by Anglo-Saxons much as it is today when it occurred as it does here, i.e., word-initially (Sweet, 1989, p. 2).

CHAPTER THREE BANISHING AND BINDING IN MIDDLE ENGLISH CHARMS

Overview

Middle English charms reflect the tendency of magic to "shape itself according to the natural spirit of the people" (Ennemoser, 1854, p. 73), and thus provide alteration in function and form in accordance with the society's needs. In Middle English there are fewer hunting charms, for example, since animal husbandry had to a greater extent obviated the need to hunt animals for food. There continue to be numerous agricultural charms, however, since the inherent risks of farming have endured. In Middle English we see the appearance of charms against the seemingly uncontrollable horrors of the plague, or "flying venom," which was the pandemic of the Middle Ages. Safety charms continue to revolve around the successful completion of a journey and imperviousness to thieves, bandits and assassins, although Middle English charms show a tendency to attempt to control the behavior of the people involved more than the objects.

Middle English charms are also decidedly Christian in tenor, since the state-sanctioned magic of the Church had superseded that of ancient folk traditions, at least in print. This infusion of Christian symbolism and mythology had a powerful effect on many Middle English charms.

Not only did the specific applications of charms alter in accordance with the needs of the society, the language of charms adapted to the changing language as well. As every student of the history of the English language knows, Middle English is very different from Old English, as a result of the linguistic forces accelerated by the Norman Conquest in 1066. Along with a radical leveling of inflections, a number of sound changes took place; and even a cursory inspection of the language used in Middle English charms shows the lexical enrichment that resulted from borrowing from Norman French. Furthermore, due to the changing structure of the language, rhythm and rhyme conventions vary (Marsh, 1871; Miller, 1989; Thomson, 1923). For example, head-rhyme or alliteration was more serviceable in Old English, but with the gradual elimination of word-final inflections in Middle English, end rhyme became more prevalent.

Yet in spite of these changes, the language continues to serve the banishing and binding intentions of performers of charms. Middle English banishing charms continue to seek either to prevent or eradicate some negative element of the charm performer's reality. Similarly, Middle English binding charms also seek to either reinforce or establish positive connections in the charmer's world through the use of formulaic language and accompanying physical performance. It will be my purpose in this chapter to show how composers of Middle English charms, like their Anglo-Saxon

predecessors, carefully crafted patterns of sound and meaning to realize their magical banishing and binding intentions.

This chapter presents descriptive analyses of four Middle English banishing charms. The first three are of popular provenance, while the fourth comes down to us within a literary context. The first charm to be discussed is a Journey Safety Charm that seeks to protect its performer from injury. The second, a Charm Against Epilepsy and the Fever, has the more ambitious goal of casting out an unwanted physical threat from the body. The third banishing charm, a Charm Against the Nightmare, is, once again, of popular origin; while the fourth, also a charm intended to banish nightmare, comes to us embedded in a literary context, Chaucer's "Miller's Tale." The first nightmare charm, as we will see, includes details concerning its performance; while the second, grounded as it is in a larger literary schema, provides us with an opportunity to see how its performance elements function.

Following the discussion of banishing charms, three Middle English binding charms will be presented. Here, once again, Middle English charms taken from popular culture will be followed by a charm that comes to us preserved in a literary context. The first two binding charms have a common purpose: they both seek to hold thieves at the scene of their crime to await justice; while the third is performed by a thief who wishes to both paralyse and blind

his victims in order to avoid being caught in the act of stealing from them. This third binding charm comes from the Wakefield Second Shepherd's Pageant of the Townley Cycle of liturgical plays, and, as is the case with Chaucer's Nightspell, its literary context provides us with additional information that can facilitate an inquiry into the conditions of its performance.

Let us turn, then, to our first Middle English banishing charm.

Banishing Danger on a Journey

Journey Safety Charm

- 1 Here I am and fourthe I mouste
 And in Jesus Criste is all my trust. No wicked thing do
 me, no dare
 [injury]
 Nother here nor elleswhare
 [Neither]
- 5 The Father with me; the Sonne with me;
 The Holy Goste, and the Trinitee,
 Be betwixte my gostly Enimie and me.
 In the name of the Father, and the Sonne,
 And the Holy Goste, Amen.
 (Middle English Lyrics, ed. Luria and
 Hoffman (1974; p. 121).

This charm, which has several Anglo-Saxon antecedents, is a historically derived charm of popular provenance. As its reference to "Jesus Criste," the "Father," the "Sonne," the "Holy Goste," and the "Trinitee" (a borrowed word) show, it seeks to ward off danger by placing the powerful Holy Trinity between the charm performer and whatever "enimie" he might meet on the road, and thus, since its intent is to keep out danger rather than to cast it out, the Journey Safety Charm is a low-intensity banishing charm.

The act of naming, and renaming in the concluding lines, of "the Father, and the Sonne, And the Holy Goste," constitutes, perhaps, the most powerful act performed in this charm, but the references the speaker makes to himself also need to be taken into account. Saying "Here I am" in the opening line of this charm requires that the speaker identify himself, which requires courage in the face of a lurking "enimie," a sinister force that cannot be allowed to harm the speaker. "Here I am" here is also an assertion of the charmer's self-determination, since it is directly followed by the words "and fourthe I must." An antonymic inclusiveness is established in line 4 through the juxtaposition of the words "here" or elleswhare," while the synonymic relationship between "wicked thing" and "dare," a word glossed as "injury," help insure the completeness of the charm covenant.

Turning to Banishing Epilepsy and Fever from the Body, which was, again, a part of popular tradition, we see a high-intensity banishing charm. Here the performer's intention is to drive out a dangerous condition that has invaded the body.

Banishing Epilepsy and the Fever

- 1 Charm Against Epilepsy and the Fever
Medicina pro morbo caduco et le fevre
In nomine Patris et Filis et Spiritus Sancti, Amen.
 (Medicine for epilepsy and the fever
 In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the 5
 Holy Ghost, Amen.)
 What manere of evil thou be,
 In Goddes name I counjere thee
 I counjere thee with the holy crosse

That Jesus was done on with fors.
 10 I counjere thee with nailes three
 That Jesus was nailed upon the tree.
 I counjere thee with the crowne of thorne
 That on Jesus hede was done with scorne.
 I counjere thee with the precious blode
 15 That Jesus shewed upon the rode.
 I counjere thee with woundes five
 That Jesus suffred be his live.
 I counjere thee with that holy spere
 That Longeus to Jesus hert can bere.
 20 I counjere thee nevertheless
 With all the vertues of the Masse,
 And all the holy prayers of Seint Dorathy.
In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, Amen.

(From Middle English Lyrics, Luria and Hoffman, Eds. p. 112)

The first lines, with their use of a learned language and with the naming of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, place the speaker in relationship to two sources of authority: established medical tradition and the Holy Trinity, which, as we have already seen in the above Journey Charm, has a potent protective power for Middle English charm performers. The power of this charm is then augmented in line 6 through the formulaic juxtaposition of direct address, a second very strong linguistic tool. With the performative speech act of "I conjoure thee . . ." in line 7, the evil to be banished is straightaway identified and then immediately brought under the charmer's control.

As the Fever charm continues, the sympathetic imagery of metonymy is harnessed to increase magical force. Metonymy is the lexical meaning relation whereby an attribute or associated part of an element is used to refer to the broader element. In this charm, a series of inanimate objects associated with the crucifixion (a cross,

nails, a crown of thorns, blood, lesions, and a spear) are enumerated metonymically not only to allude to Jesus, but, more interestingly, to the magical act of suffering which has purchased eternal life for humanity.

Each metonymic reference is preceded by "I conjoure thee," and thus with his six references to the metonyms of suffering, the charm performer confronts his opponent: the ailment to be banished. As he does so, the charm performer calls on the power of metonymic reference to the Savior himself and to the suffering that made that power available to him. Finally, conjuring his opponent "with all the vertues of the masse," the performer once again asserts his belief that Christ's suffering was not pointless. Christ's death purchased eternal life for humanity, and the implicit message here is that, properly called upon, Christ's sacrifice can also purchase freedom from physical suffering for his followers.

O'Keefe (1982, p. 49) delineates the various permutations of metonymy by outlining how magical sympathy links are based on tradition. Every culture, says O'Keefe (1982, p. 49), possesses certain parameters of possible metonymic associations to be used in magical language, and these parameters are determined by cultural tradition. He asserts that because of the variety of cultural paradigms, there are many associative schemas, including "the part stands for the whole," "it happened before," "condensation," "displacement," "transformation into opposites," etc. When

Till that he founde that foule wight
[creature]

And whan that he here founde,
[her]

He here bete and he here bounde,

10 Till trewly there here trouthe sche plight
[troth]

That sche sholde not come be nighte,
[by]

Withinne seven rode of londe space
[rods]

Ther as Seint Jeorge inamed was
[Where]

St. George. St. George. St. George.

15 In nomine Patris, etc. And write this in a bille
[letter]

and hange it in the hors mane.
[horse's]

In this charm, a narrative interlude recounts the exploits of "Seint Jorge," who triumphed over the dragon in medieval lore. The metonymic paradigm at work here is "it happened before," for as Saint George was victorious in the past, the charm performer, through magical association with the previous victory, derives sufficient power to triumph over the nightmare in the present.

This charm also illustrates an interesting aspect of homophony. Words which have the same pronunciation yet two or even three separate meanings are classified as homophones. In Chapter Two, the phenomenon of homophony was shown to enrich a magical utterance through semantic resonance; specifically by incorporating the associational

meanings involved in punning. Here we get a glimpse of a certain semantic "slippage," due to the homophonous connection between "mare" in the title Charm for the Nightmare and the word for monster in Old English-- mara. The surface meaning of the word is obviously associated with horses, or mares, while the underlying meaning of a night monster may still have some of its former force (St. George, after all, killed a monster, not a horse).

This Charm for the Nightmare also illustrates the continuing importance of performance elements in Middle English charms. As outlined in Chapter Two, the elements of performance in charms can include writing or inscribing symbols or text in a particular manner, the incorporation of magically and symbolically significant objects, and accompanying physical action, or symbolic gestures. As in the Anglo-Saxon banishing charm For Fertile Land, the Charm for the Nightmare continues to incorporate these elements of performance in order to insure magical efficacy. The charm performer is instructed to incorporate an object of magical significance (a flint stone with a natural hole), write the charm on paper, and accompany the charm with the appropriate action (hanging the inscription and the flint over the stable door).

Chaucer's Charm Against the Nightmare², below, also confirms the continuing importance of the elements of performance in Middle English charms. It is preserved in a larger literary text, The "Miller's Tale" in Chaucer's

Canterbury Tales, which makes possible a glimpse of the possible functions of magical performance within the culture. In order to understand these possible functions, we must place the charm within the context of the "Miller's Tale."

The story concerns a love tangle among an aging credulous carpenter, Old John, his buxom child-bride, Alison, their cunning young lodger, Nicholas, and an effeminate church clerk named Absalom. In order to tryst with Alison, Nicholas fakes a trance and has a "vision" of an impending cataclysmic flood. Terrified that Nicholas has been possessed by an evil spirit while in his trance, Old John performs a charm for the nightmare.

Nightspell

(From "The Miller's Tale" in the Canterbury Tales,
lines 3474 - 3480, Edited from the Hengwort Manuscript
by F.N. Blake, 1980)

- 1 Therewith the nyghtspel seyde he anon-rightes
On foure halues of the hous aboute
And on the thressshfold on the dore withoute:
'Jesu Crist and seint Benedight,
5 Blesse this hous from euery wikked wight;
 [creature]
For the nyghtes nerye the White Pater Noster
 [monster]
Where wentestow seinte Petres suster?'

Nicholas' vision convinces Old John to climb into a kneading tub that he has suspended from the rafters in order to escape the cataclysmic flood. When Old John awakes to what

he thinks is the cataclysmic flood, he cuts himself free, crashes to the ground, breaks his arm, and suffers the derision of his neighbors for his lunacy. Not only is the charm performed by the story's biggest fool, Old John, he cannot even recite it correctly! It is well known that incantatory language summons power in order to accomplish a desired effect through magical means (Huxley, 1956), but clearly, no power can be summoned if the performance of the charm is mangled--through ignorance--into an apparently ineffective question: "Where wentestow seinte Petres suster?" ³

In The Miller's Tale, Chaucer creates a charm performance context in which the audience's expectations are that the charm will be a ridiculous, abortive attempt at magic, and the reason for the performance is a comical attempt by a buffoon to ward off an imagined danger. The individual who performs the charm is a credulous nincompoop who earns the contemptuous derision of his wife, his neighbors, and certainly the audience. Yet while the expectations of the audience are at odds with those of the charmer, the functions of the magical performance are fulfilled: for Old John, the performance elements in the charm serve to further strengthen its banishing efficacy; thus he repeats it at the four corners of the house and at the threshold. For Chaucer's audience, the function of the performance is to remind them of their own permutating magical traditions and to reinforce the newly ascendant

Christian paradigm, which denigrated the old folk magic as foolish and ineffectual.

Binding Thieves to the Scene of the Crime

We turn now to a descriptive analysis of Middle English binding charms. The intent of the following charm against thieves is to bind villains to their crime, there to await discovery and justice upon the charmer's return. This charm draws force from the most sacred images of Christianity: the mystical Trinity, the cumulative and undissipated magical energy of every mass "that ever was sayde--more and lasse" although it surreptitiously retains several pagan elements: "the vertu of herb, grass, ston and tree." Here we see the emerging ascendancy of Christianity as the symbolic infrastructure for pre-Christian practices. The charms which have come down to us from this period generally (but not always) aspire to accomplish magic within the Christian theological infrastructure, although traces of pre-Christian elements remain incorporated in the usage.

A Charm Against Thieves

(From Middle English Lyrics, Luria and Hoffman, Eds., p. 120)

- 1 I conjour hem in the name of the Fader, and Sone,
[them]
- and Holy Gost,
- In hem is vertu althermost!
- In the beginning and in the ending,
- 5 And in the vertu of all thing
- Is, and was, and ever schal be-

In the vertu of the Holy Trinitee-
 By the vertu of every Masse,
 That ever was seyde, more and lasse-
 10 In the vertu of herbe, grass, ston and tree-
 And in the vertu that ever may be.
 If here come eny fon
 [foes]
 Me to robbe, other me to sclon
 [or] [slay]
 They stond as stille as eny ston,
 15 They have no power away to gon
 By the vertu of the Holy Trinitee
 Tille they have life of me.
 Lord Jesu, graunte me this,
 As ye ben in heven bliss.

This Christian charm gathers power through antonymy, wherein words have different sound sequences and opposite meanings--yet are connected through their shared inclusion in a semantic field. "Small" and "large" are antonyms: They sound different and have opposite meanings, but they are both entailed within the semantic field of size. In fact, they are both size determiners, only of different degree. "Cold" and "hot" are both within the semantic field of temperature descriptives, "beginning" and "ending" that of time sequence, "more" and "less" that of amount. Antonymy gathers power in charms by gathering in all elements that lie between the two opposite poles of a semantic field, like so many fish in a net.

In line 4, the charmer summons all the virtue that has existed within the dimension of time: "In the beginning and in the ending . . ." and in line 6, the virtue of all that "is, and was, and ever shall be . . ." The antonyms of quantity are also used to encircle and gather power. All magical power generated by any mass "more and lasse" is conjured. In charms, antonymy increases magical force by delineating a sphere of reference and including all elements within the polarity of that reference.

This charm also illustrates how end-rhyme emerged as a sound association device to enhance magical power in Middle English charms. Because case endings and other inflections had been simplified or eliminated by this time, in Middle English charms alliteration no longer served as the predominant rhyming technique, as it did in Anglo-Saxon.⁴ The usual rhyming pattern in Middle English charms is the couplet (occasionally punctuated with a variation such as the A/B/A structure). In A Charm Against Thieves, couplet end rhyme transcends its regular sound association duties, and plays a crucial role in the actual binding conjuration:

If here come eny fon
[foes]

Me to robbe, other me to sclon
[or] [slay]

They stond as stille as eny ston,

They have no power away to gon

Throughout these four crucial lines, the phonetic structure of the end-rhyme does not vary; all elements (the thieves,

the harm they might do, and their "paralysis") are all bound tightly in the same end-rhyme structure.

Although end-rhyme predominates in this charm, alliteration does endure as a sound patterning device. In line 14, which seals the charm,

They stond as stille as eny ston,

alliterative sound symbolism is employed to maximum effect. Within the proscribed parameters of this particular universe of discourse, the /st/ consonant cluster suggests the concept of remaining fixed to one spot, i.e., standing as still as a stone.

Binding Oneself to Hearth and Home

The following charm against thieves seeks to bind, not only the thieves to the scene of their crime, but a portion of the charmer's essence to the goods left behind.

Against Thieves

(From Middle English Lyrics, Luria and Hoffman, Eds., p. 120)

- 1 To the Holy Goste my godes I bequeth
 That in this place be set,
 To the Father and the Sone
 All theves for to let
 [hinder]

- 5 My goodes away to fet
 [fetch]

- The Holy Goste be them before
 And make them for to let
 [give up]
 And make them to abide

Till I againe come;

10 Thorough the vertu of the Holy Gost
[power?]

The Father, and the Sonne.

Now I go my way - tide what may betide!

If any theves hither come, here I shall abide.

I bind you theves

15 And do you conjure,

So St. Bartelmew bound the Devil

With his bearde so hoare . . .*

*The line is incomplete

Here, as in the Charm Against Epilepsy and the Fever, above, the charm performer makes use of the juxtaposition of direct address and powerful speech acts to insure the safety of hearth and home. Any thieves that might "hither come" are addressed directly, and simultaneously brought under the charmer's control with two strong performatives:

I bind you, thieves
And do you conjure

This charm also provides an example of a different permutation of antonymy, for here the intent is not to encircle all degrees within a semantic field, but rather to include the binary opposites of going and coming. The charmer is going away and wishes to prevent theft while on a journey. The charm asks that any thieves that come be trapped "Till I againe come. . . ." Again the charmer asserts that he or she is going away: "Now I go my way--tide what may betide!" but the opposite concept is immediately

introduced when the charmer says "If any thieves hither come, here I shall abide." And thus, even though the concluding line, with its reference to St. Bartelmew's act of binding the devil with his own beard is incomplete, the impression is that of success, of all-encompassing opposites bound together.

A Thief Binds His Victims in a Nightspell

The following charm comes from the state-sanctioned religious drama The Wakefield Second Shepherd's Pageant from the Townley Cycle. Religious plays evolved from a church-sanctioned liturgical cycle, the Officium Pastorum, which in turn has its provenance from a Latin Christmas trope (Cawley, p. 79).

Since the charm is contained within a much larger text, a brief explanation of the context is in order. Three shepherds lie near their flocks on a bitterly cold night. Mak, an unsavory character, appears out of the darkness and asks for hospitality. The shepherds, against their better judgement, allow him to bed down with them for the night. When they drift off to sleep, Mak recites a nightspell which allows him to make off with a sheep while they remain in a deep, oblivious slumber.

A Night Spell

(Recited by Mak the sheep stealer in The Wakefield Second Shepherd's Pageant, The Townley Cycle)

- 1 Manus tuas commendo,
Pontio Pilato.
Christ's cross me speed!

5 Now were time for a man that lacks what he would
 To stalk privily then unto a fold,
 And nimbly to work then and not be too bold,
 For he might abuy the bargain if it were told
 At the ending.

10 Now were time for to reel;
 But he needs good counsel
 That fain would fare well
 And has but little spending.

15 But about you a circle as round as the moon
 To I have done what I will, till that it be noon
 That ye lie stone still till that I have done;
 And I shall say theretill of good works a fone:
 'On Height
 Over your heads my hand I lift.
 Out go your eyes! Fordo your sight!'

20 But yet I must make better shift
 And it be right.

When the shepherds finally awake, they discover their missing sheep and go straightaway to Mak's cottage, where they accuse Mak and his wife of wrongdoing, which the couple deny. While the shepherds discuss whether or not to lynch Mak's wife, they notice a horned infant in a cradle (actually the missing sheep in disguise). The shepherds are shocked and easily identify a witch's mark on the "child's" ear, but the doting mother says she sees nothing amiss, except perhaps for a little elf magic.

This induces the shepherds to depart without seeking vengeance (except for tossing Mak in a blanket). They are rewarded for their kindness by being summoned by heavenly choirs of angels to attend the birth of Jesus in a manger in Bethlehem. They arrive opportunely, see the Christ child, and are treated to a rather cryptic explanation of the virgin birth before they depart.

Mak's nightspell is a high-intensity binding charm whose intent is to bind his victims so completely that they are paralysed; lying "stone still" until he has done. Mak also wishes to blind the shepherds to his act, and apparently he is successful, for they see nothing while he steals the sheep, and later, they cannot tell the difference between a sheep and an infant in a cradle.

Mak the sheep stealer's Nightspell gathers additional power by manipulating the lexical properties of several of its words through polysemy. Polysemy as defined by Akjamian, et al.(1987), Grandy (1987), and Lehrer (1974) is the lexical meaning relation in which words sound alike and have different meanings, yet they cannot be classified as homophones because their meanings are obviously related.

When Mak says "For it might abuy the bargain if it were told" we can see an example of polysemy, for the verbally-derived adjective "told" has two different but related meanings. In its older sense, "to tell" means to count or enumerate, while in its more modern usage it means to relate (or recount). Again when Mak says "Now were time for to reel," we see three related properties of the word "reel." In its most ancient sense, "reel" comes from the Old English hreol, a bobbin on which carded wool was wound. Mak, of course, intends to steal a sheep, which will, if he is successful, fill his bobbin abundantly. "Reel" also has the polysemous meaning of turning round and round, or being in a whirl; i.e., dancing, a direct allusion to the pagan

nocturnal dances held in opposition to the sanctioned church at this time. Finally, in a related usage, "to reel" means "to waver or fall back, as from a blow." This is, of course, what Mak hopes will happen to his victims after his charm is complete.

Thus do polysemous meaning relations increase power in magical language. Mak makes connections between his need, his orientation, and his goal by drawing on three polysemous aspects of one word. Since magic is integrative in essence, Mak's charm is solid in form, if not in intent. He has integrated all schematic aspects of his action.

Sound Associations in Mak's Nightspell

As in Anglo-Saxon charms, a four-stress rhythm is still the prominent metrical characteristic in most Middle English charms. In Mak's Middle English binding charm, as in the Anglo-Saxon binding charm, the Lay of the Last Survivor, metrical economy at the climactic moment of sealing the charm sets the most important language apart. The rhythmic regularity in Mak's Nightspell is a constant (xx)x/(x)x/(x)x/xx/ iambic with minor syllabic variations, but at the crucial moment, the metrical pattern changes:

/ x x / x x / x /
Out go your eyes! Fordo your sight!

Mak's Nightspell also illustrates how the method of articulation can enhance power in charms by paralleling the intent of the charm performer on a phonetic level. For

example, in Mak's sheep-stealing charm, he begins the actual body of the charm on line 13 with the phrase, "But about you a circle as round as the moon . . .," and the very sounds he uses to cast his spell symbolize his magical intent.

Although we see the letters [ou] written on the page, in Middle English they did not represent the diphthong /aw/ present in the modern pronunciation of the word "house." Rather, the [ou] spelling was merely the Norman orthographic convention for representing the phoneme /u/, a high, back, tense rounded vowel. In the opening line of his binding charm, Mak draws a circle with his manner of articulation as well as with his words, using no fewer than six mid and high back rounded vowels. Thus, through the use of sound, Mak reinforces his magical circle-drawing intent.

After Mak has drawn his circle, both semantically and phonemically, he then proceeds to raise his hands and expel his magical energy toward his victims. The sounds Mak uses also serve to focus his mind on the task at hand through symbolic association. Mak intones

On height
/ɔn hixt/

Over your heads my hand I lift
/ovər yʊr hɛdz mi hand i lift/

Out go your eyes! Fordo your sight!
/ut go yʊr iyəz! Fɔrdo yʊr sixt/

As Mak magically sends his power forth to do its work in the world, he literally expels the sound which represents

it from the back of his mouth to the front. In the first line, the back vowel /o/ is followed by the front high vowel /i/, while even the consonants parallel this outward movement. The velar fricative /x/ is then followed by the alveolar plosive /t/, which launches the utterance decisively and dramatically into the world. Mak repeats this symbolic articulatory expulsion in the subsequent vowels and consonants. Notice the forward motion in the /o/ ~ /ɛ/, /u/ ~ /ɛ/, /a/ ~ /i/ alternations in line 2, and the parallel progressions of /o/ ~ /u/ ~ /i/ in line 19. As we saw in Anglo-Saxon charms, sound symbolism can enhance power in charms by reinforcing the charm performer's intent through imitation and its more elegant cousin, suggestion. Here we also see how sound symbolism can increase the power of a magical utterance by paralleling the intent of the charm performer on a phonetic level.

The Functions of Performance in Mak's Nightspell

In order to understand the function of performance within a culture, Charles Briggs (1988) reminded us that we have to know who the performer is, what the audience expects, and why the performance is taking place. Because tradition and performance interact reciprocally, members of the community are informed of their traditions through the performance of formulaic speech, including charms. Thus the performances "become a sounding board for a chorus of

innumerable voices" (p.1). Whether magical performance is private or public, individual or communal, its functions are threefold. The first function of performance is to help accomplish the specific end of the charm performer. Thus, the elements of performance--i.e., writing, verbal delivery, incorporating magically significant objects, and symbolic gestures--focus the energy of the charmer on the magical task at hand. Second, this incorporation of performance elements informs (or reinforms) the participants of traditional knowledge. Third, reiterating this traditionally shared knowledge reinforces shared cultural values. In the England of Mak the sheep stealer, the traditional knowledge and shared cultural values which Mak's performance of the Nightspell should reinforce were actually in conflict, for pre-Christian and Christian magical paradigms⁵ were locked in a power struggle for cultural ascendancy.

This struggle evolved gradually. Anglo-Saxon law did not view the practice of magic as a concerted conspiracy to overthrow Christianity, and in the early Middle Ages "the standards of evidence, the rules of trial, and the penalties tended to be like those for any other anti-social act" (Robbins, 1970; p. 161). In other words, it was what people did that counted, not how they did it (Peters, 1978).

The transition from paganism to Christianity was extremely slow, and people continued to participate in the

ancient religion of their forebears throughout Europe while they incorporated the cosmology, vocabulary and symbolism of Christianity into their cultural schema (Peters, 1978).

Three centuries before Mak, Christian ritual competed with pagan practice; so much so that the Canon Episcopi of 906 explicitly condemned the custom of worship at nocturnal feasts (Hole, 1977, p. 24). In the century before The Second Shepherd's Pageant, a pagan sect devoted to Aphrodite still flourished in the Norman capital of Rouen, and French manuscripts of the Church of Coureans corroborate the particular Norman sympathy towards the magical rituals of the country folk, to the extent that the ladies of their nobility attended the nocturnal celebrations of the Old Religion (Crossley-Holland, 1982; Murray, 1921, p. 72).

Across the channel in post-conquest England, the folk who inhabited the wild heath, or "heathens" (from O.E. hæp) also continued with their pre-Christian ceremonies, and were often prized by manorial Norman lords as grooms and hunters for their horse whispering and hunting magic.⁶ Yet the pre-Christian paradigm had assumed a descendant status and was not wholly sanctioned by society.

Philosophy flourished again and the wisdom of the ancients was no longer discounted out of hand: Magicians like Solomon, Zoroaster and Pythagoras were integrated into the scholarly canon, portrayed as pre-Christian students of art and science. Yet the Church's emerging ideology began

to view itself in strong opposition to the pre-Christian paradigm (Griffon, 1991). It therefore simultaneously found itself obliged to increase papal pressure to check the spread of heretical beliefs, some of which had been imported from the East during the crusades, but many of which were ancient folkways resurfacing (Seligmann, 1968).

By Mak's time, the tension between the old folk-ways and the Christian church had begun to take the shape--not so much a philosophical debate--as a power struggle for cultural ascendancy. As the conflict between state-sanctioned magical practice and the independent folk practices of the people became more evident, many individuals executed for unauthorized magical practices were practicing Christians whose magical language was entirely Christian in tenor (Dalyell, 1973; Kittredge, 1956). They were burned because they operated without the authorization of the hierarchy, thereby compromising the church's control over the magical practices of the people.

In the Wakefield Second Shepherd's Pageant, the character of Mak illustrates the church's negative stance toward unauthorized magical practice. Although he is not a consummate buffoon like Old John in Chaucer's Charm Against the Nightmare, above, neither is Mak an admirable character. He is a rebel, for though he is in need, he will not conform to the shared values of the culture. As he does in line 4, Mak refers to his "lack" at various points during the play.

He and his wife are hungry: Mak tells his wife a little later, "This twelvemonth was I not so fain of one sheepmeat" (Line 324). He also says that those who would survive, or "fare well" and who have no money, "but little spending," are in need of "good counsel." Directly after this, Mak demonstrates that he does not intend to seek his "good counsel" at the foot of the Christian cross, but rather from the more ancient magic circle.

He begins his incantation in Latin, saying Manus tuas commendo, Pontio Pilato ("Into your hands I commend myself, Pontius Pilate"). As we saw in Chapter Two, Latin, the powerful language of the Church had been used since Anglo-Saxon times within charms of more pagan origin (Storms, 1975). Here we see no Christian overlay within the charm; on the contrary, in the Latin statement Mak rejects the Church by giving himself over to Christ's executioner.

Yet Mak cannot ignore the Christian paradigm; rejecting it constitutes a degree of participation--however unwilling---within that schema. This reactive phenomenon is explained by folklorist Kay L. Cothran (1979; p. 444), who holds that ". . . rejection of any particular tradition . . . amounts by an ironic twist to participation in that very same tradition." We now have a profile of who the charm performer is: a rebel who symbolizes the undesirability of adhering to the pre-Christian magical paradigm. Interestingly, however, Mak's rebel stance in no

way impedes him from fulfilling the functions of the charm performance. Mak's delivery and his incorporation of magically symbolic gestures and speech all help him fulfill the first function of magical performance, which is to attain his magical goal. Mak wishes to steal a sheep and get away with it, and his Nightspell helps him do precisely that.

We now also have an understanding of what the audience of this charm performance expects: to be informed or reinforced of traditional knowledge, which is the second function of performance, according to Briggs (1988). On a surface level, we see that the audience expects to be reinforced of the undesirability of adhering to the pre-Christian magical paradigm: Mak is, after all, mistrusted by his neighbors, tossed in a blanket, his wife is almost lynched, and he misses the visit to Bethlehem and the explanation of the virgin birth. Yet on a deeper level, Mak's reliance upon the timeless binding charm formula serves to reinforce the audience of the traditional pre-Christian knowledge now in conflict with that of the Church. When Mak draws the ancient magical circle, refers to lunar deities, and relies on the well-known "stone still" phrase, he demonstrates the remarkable continuity between Old and Middle English charms. Surface parameters may have shifted, but charm performers continue to use semantic resonance,

rhythm, rhyme, and sound symbolism to translate their banishing and binding intents into magical action.

Briggs also tells us that in order to understand the functions of performance within a culture, we must know not only who the performer is and what the expectations of the audience are, but why the performance is taking place. Of course, on the most obvious level, the reiteration of traditional knowledge here is designed to reinforce shared Christian values. Yet this performance has another purpose: when Mak performs his charm, the audience is reminded not only of the newer, ascendant magical values of the Church, but also of the ancient magical values of the folk, and more importantly, the audience is reminded once again that these two components of their culture are in conflict. Thus are all three functions of performance as defined by Briggs fulfilled in Mak's recitation of his Nightspell.

Notes

1. Fear of evil spirits continues today in much of the rural South the United States. For further explanation of this phenomenon, see Patricia K. Rickels (1979): "Some Accounts of Witch Riding," in Readings in American Folklore, Jan Harold Brunvand, ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., and Herron, Leona (1973) "Conjuring and Conjure Doctors," in Mother Wit From the Laughing Barrel, Alan Dundes, Ed.

2. Scholars generally concur that this is the correct meaning of the text. The actual manuscript contains the word nerve, which, if it is not a misspelling of the word verve, is utterly meaningless. (See Blake, 1980; p. 145.)

3. Questions do appear in charms, as the following Charm For Fear By Night attests:

Charm for Fear by Night (Carmichael, 1992; p. 53)

God before me, God behind me,
 God above me, God below me;
 I on the path of God,
 God upon my track.

Who is there on land?
 Who is there on wave?
 Who is there on billow?
 Who is there by door-post?
 Who is along with us?
 God and Lord.

I am here abroad,
 I am here in need,
 I am here in pain,
 I am here in straits,
 I am here alone,
 O, God aid me.

Note that, as illustrated by the above example, when questions do appear in serious charms, they are answered. John the Carpenter does not answer his question, and to this day we do not know why he should ask where St. Peter's sister went.

4. For a more thorough treatment of phonological change, see Kiparsky, 1988.

5. For a further exploration of Christian magic, see Meyer, Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith (1994). Ancient Christian Magic.

6. Horse whispering survives today in Ireland, where specially gifted individuals are said to be able to tame any horse merely by whispering to it (See Gardner, p. 74). Other examples of magical language in relation to animals are well attested: Bouisson (1961) speaks of Black Forest herdsmen who, "when they lead their bulls to market, murmur what is, no doubt, a very ancient chant" (p. 93).

CHAPTER FOUR MODERN BANISHING AND BINDING CHARMS

Overview

The surface applications of Modern English charms have shifted again as technology has obviated the need of many ancient charms. Now when we embark upon a journey, most of us choose to prevent losses with insurance and alarms rather than by singing a charm against thieves. With recourse to genetic engineering and hive construction, modern beekeepers no longer feel the need to charm the bees as in Anglo-Saxon times, and factory farming has all but eliminated the need for hunting charms.¹

Although needs to which many older charms were directed are no longer felt, twentieth-century tensions have fostered the composition of new charms to meet new needs. These non-historically derived charms might appear somehow less legitimate than those derived from traditional folklore sources, but I would justify their inclusion in this discussion by reference to the work of Alan Dundes (1968; 1984). Dundes observed that "nothing is as difficult to see as the obvious," and suggested that we turn our collective

anthropological skills upon the analysis of our own culture, using a commensurate rigor and the same methodology applied in the "bush" (1968, p. 401-402).

Dundes' insights license attempts to transcend possible bias against current charm practice as being somehow trendy, frivolous or less worthy of serious inquiry than phenomena which have had the advantage of broader scholarly recognition over time. Thus the following discussion of charms proceeds in part from Dundes' maxim that "the smallest detail may reveal the same patterning present in larger aspects of culture" (p. 409), and in part from the current sociolinguistic perspective that the fact that language patterns are used--whether or not their use is historically recognized or recently acknowledged--justifies their study (Tannen, 1984; Baugh, 1983; Holmes, 1986). Thus if the charm adheres to the previously given definition and has magical intent, formulaic elements and a performance dimension, it may be included in this discussion.

In the areas of healing and love, our society's hope of gaining desperately needed power over physical and psychological circumstances through charms is still clearly visible.² Traditional folk medicine draws upon historically transmitted health charms to cure burns, remove warts, staunch wounds, and even fight cancer;³ but many forward-looking, educated members of our current society have begun to compose charms in order to battle serious health threats

in which medical technology remains destitute of power to heal physically or psychologically.

For example, the pandemics of cancer and AIDS have given rise to "alternative" recourses such as prayer groups, faith healing, positive imaging, visualization, and psychic surgery, which incorporate newly invented charms. As Paul Fejos, M.D. (1963, p. 43) reminds us, people, "ever since the earliest period of history, when face to face with bodily pain or mental anguish, must have sought salvation from some power outside themselves."

Wellness "affirmations" (charms) are also appearing in mainstream society in greater numbers. Consider the following wellness charm collected from a Seventh-Day Adventist summer camp in north Florida in 1990. It is meant to be sung to the tune of "Mama's Little Baby Loves Shortening Bread":

Wellness Charm

Every little cell in my body is happy
Every little cell in my body is well.
I'm so happy every little cell
In my body is happy and well.

Many people have also begun to re-invent magical charms to heal psychological ailments as well as physical ones. Chronic depression, the psychic common cold of modern society, is alleviated daily by millions who chant "Every day in every way I am getting better and better," and numerous other affirmations intended to improve mental health. Another mental disorder, anxiety or "stress," is also on the rise throughout our population. Teenagers have

taken to wearing a particular brand of tee-shirts which bear varied anti-anxiety charms printed on their backs. Here is one I transcribed off the shirt of a fourteen-year-old boy at the Orlando airport:

No Fear

I'm not scared.
 I'm not afraid.
 I'm tough.
 I'm an animal
 And I'll eat you
 If I have to.
 NO FEAR

Modern technology has proven woefully inadequate in ensuring happiness in love, so global corporations aggressively advertise the magical properties of aromatic love potions guaranteed to render the wearer irresistible and unforgettable. In urban areas, the mystical powers of the computer have been harnessed in order to find anxious singles their "perfect match" while on a more grass-roots level young people continue to pluck daisy petals while chanting "She loves me, she loves me not." And when all else fails, the radio assures us, we can avail ourselves of Madame Roo's "Love Potion Number Nine."

Modern English charms seem to be more concerned with emotional and psychological needs than their earlier counterparts, and clearly, their verbal structure has also altered in accordance with the evolution of the language. Rhythm and rhyme are not used in precisely the same ways as they were in Middle and Old English and in this age of short attention spans, soundbites, and sensory overload, the

format of modern charms tends to be much shorter and simpler. Nevertheless, charms performed by twentieth-century speakers of English show an amazing survival of the operative components and underlying purposes of Old and Middle English charms.

Like their predecessors, charms in Modern English seek either to banish or to bind some element of the charm performer's reality through the use of formulaic language and accompanying physical performance; and both types, as we shall continue to see in this chapter, can take either low-intensity or high-intensity forms; that is, they may be intended to preserve a desired condition that already exists, or they may provide a way to effect a radical change in the physical environment. Protection charms, like the before discussed No Fear Charm and Playground Charm, along with the Prayer of Distress and Sticks and Stones, to be discussed below, seek to keep harm out (rather than cast it out) and thus are low-intensity banishing charms, while the Bytter Bytten charm and the Charm against Hiccups, also forthcoming in this discussion, are classified as high-intensity banishing charms, since their intention is to cast a negative element out of the performer's reality. And some charms like the Exorcism of the Eye, discussed below, contain language ambiguous enough to enable them to act with either low or high intensity, depending upon the context of the utterance and the intent of the user.

The low-intensity high-intensity distinction can also be made with reference to binding charms. Since they are intended to magically reinforce the connection already made in the physical world, work charms that summon milk from the cow or butter from cream are low-intensity binding charms. Low-intensity binding charms, then, can have simple, physical purposes. They can also have more general purposes and psychological or spiritual goals. The Wellness Charm previously presented and the Luck Charm to be discussed below, for example, also seek to reinforce connections (like the connection between health or good fortune the Luck Charm performer believes he or she already has). Similarly, blessings like the Bahai Blessing presume the existence of a deity, acknowledge a pre-existing relationship between creator and created, and seek to reinforce that connection.

As is the case with some banishing charms, the language of a binding charm may be ambiguous enough to allow it to function as either a low- or high-intensity charm, depending upon the context of its performance and the intent of the performer. In this chapter I will show how two binding charms, The Consecration of the Seed and the Charm to Bride the Aid-Woman, could be used either as low-intensity or high-intensity binding charms.

In many more instances, the language of modern charms indicates explicit high-intensity binding intent: they reflect the intent of charmers to attempt to create bonds between elements seen to be previously unconnected. In this

chapter I will discuss the operative components of several clearly identifiable high-intensity binding charms. The first is the Charm for Dairy Abundance, which seeks to reestablish connections between abundance and the charmer's livestock on the last night of the year, a time of endings and new beginnings. The second high-intensity binding charm to be discussed here is the familiar phrase For Better or for Worse. This formulaic phrase seeks to bind two individuals into one legal, physical, and spiritual entity, if not for eternity, at least until death. A modern Rune Casting Charm used for purposes of divination can also be classified as a high-intensity binding charm and will be discussed below as a member of this group. The last two charms to be presented here will be discussed in terms of the success with which a Christian and a Wiccan performer call upon the resources of language to accomplish their high-intensity binding purposes, and with reference to the ways the two function within their cultural context.

In this chapter I will give attention to the "thought" and "word" components that empower these charms, whether they are low-intensity or high-intensity, banishing or binding charms, in the minds of their users. Discussion of elements of "thought," or intent, will involve giving attention to verb forms and to syntactic structures. Discussion of "word" components will necessitate giving attention to the aural effects of identical repetition, metrical patterns, vowel harmony, and alliteration. And, as

close examination of earlier English charms would lead us to expect, charms of our time can be expected to draw upon other salient powers of language as well.

Low-Intensity Banishing Charms

Now let us turn to the low-intensity banishing charms, the first of which bears the title Prayer of Distress. This charm was collected by Alexander Carmichael, a British civil servant who collected and translated numerous charms in Scots, Gaelic, and English dialects in the British Highlands in the late nineteenth century.

Prayer of Distress (excerpt; Carmichael, 1992, p. 93)

May the cross of the crucifixion tree
 Upon the wounded back of Christ
 Deliver me from distress
 From death and from spells.

This charm's apparent purpose--and the reason for its presentation here as a low-intensity banishing charm--is to preserve a sense of safety achieved through an already established connection with a trusted Protector. The most interesting feature of the part of the Prayer of Distress presented here is its use of metonymy, the device whereby a speaker can use an element which is an attribute of or associated with a larger concept to refer to that broader concept. This capability, when called upon in charm performance, enables the performer to call upon the power of the magical Law of Association.

As we saw in Chapter Three, O'Keefe's delineation of metonymic parameters include the associative schema "the

part stands for the whole" (1982, p. 49). In the above excerpt from the Prayer for Distress, the cross of Christ and the wounded back upon which he carried it metonymically refer to the entirety of Jesus' terrible trial and his eventual triumph over it. Furthermore, Christ incarnate as an individual metonymically represents humanity as a whole, since in his deliverance, the whole of God's creation was likewise delivered.

The accessories of Christ's suffering also access O'Keefe's parameter "it happened before."⁴ They represent the notion that delivery from suffering has happened before, and therefore can happen again. If we remember that in our culture we view history as a linear continuum, we can see how an event which happened in the past can metonymically refer to one which might happen in the present: deliverance of the current sufferer. Thus the cross of The Prayer of Distress metonymically refers to two concepts: one, that Jesus is willing to suffer in our place, and two, that suffering was overcome in the past and it can be overcome in the present.

The following low-intensity banishing charm relies on an assertion that the speaker is impervious to teasing and its resultant distress in order to banish the possibility of distress from the charmer's reality. It is a standard on playgrounds in England and America:

Sticks and Stones

Sticks and stones
Will break my bones
But words will never hurt me.

This assertion becomes a means to a hoped-for magical consequence: by making the assertion, the charm performer expects to banish the possible danger of cutting words, for while the power of things to hurt is affirmed, the power of words to harm the charmer is denied. This humble playground charm illustrates the enduring use of sound patterning devices in Modern English charms to translate the charm performer's intent into reality. The use of alliteration (Sticks/stones, break/bones, words/will) is immediately apparent, but there are other, subtler ways in which the words are connected as well.

For example, notice that this charm is entirely composed of monosyllabic words, with the exception of the adverbial negator "never," which serves as the verbal banishing instrument. The two plural nouns in the first line constitute the compound subject of the first clause. They are monosyllabic and what is more, they have the same syllabic structure: a beginning, or onset, composed of two consonants, a vowel (or a syllabic consonant) in the core, or nucleus, and two more consonants at the end, or coda. This becomes more apparent when the line is transcribed phonetically:

stIks	ænd	stonz
CCVCC		CCVCC

Thus these two substantives are connected in two ways. Their onsets have identical phonetic constitution: the consonant cluster /st/, and they have an identical syllabic structure: CCVCC.

Line two contains the verb and object of the first clause. Again, it is immediately apparent that the identical codas of the words "stones" and "bones" are linked in a true end-rhyme; i.e., a pair of words which begin differently but end in the same series of phonemes and have the same syllabic stress pattern.⁵ Here, although trochaic and iambic patterns are dynamically opposed, the monosyllabic stress pattern provides metrical parallelism for the end rhyme:

/ x /
 Sticks and stones (trochaic)
 x / x /
 Will Break my bones (iambic)

The sound patterning devices of end-rhyme and meter connect the elements of this utterance in ways that are apparent to us, but what is, perhaps, less apparent is the subtler way in which consonance functions to this end as well. Robert Creed (1967) proposed a broad rubric for the concept of rhyme, and included the concept of consonance as well as the more traditionally recognized rhyming techniques of alliteration and end-rhyme. Consonance refers to the recurrence of consonants inside words. Specifically, these consonants are at the coda, or end, of a stressed syllable and the preceding vowels are dissimilar. In the Sticks and Stones charm we see the velar stop /k/ recurring in the codas of the subject and the verb:

sticks / break

Since both words are monosyllabic, and contain one full vowel, they are, perforce, stressed syllables (Wilson,

1982). Furthermore, the preceding vowels are dissimilar: /I/ and /ey/, so the subtle sound patterning device of consonance functions in conformity with its prescribed parameters, and links the subject with the verb in this low-intensity banishing charm.

A Dual-Intensity Banishing Charm

Occasionally, the intensity of a charm cannot be determined without knowing the context of its performance. For example, the following banishing charm could be a passive, low-intensity charm which seeks merely to keep the evil eye from penetrating the performer's reality. However, the language is ambiguous enough that in a different context, it could also be used as a high-intensity banishing charm to cast out an evil eye curse which had affected the charmer or someone close to him or her.

Exorcism of the Eye (Carmichael, 1992; p. 56).

I trample upon the eye,
 As tramples the duck upon the lake,
 As tramples the swan upon the water,
 As tramples the horse upon the plain,
 As tramples the cow upon the nook,
 As tramples the host of the elements,
 As tramples the host of the elements.

When this speaker states, "I trample upon the eye," the purpose is not merely to inform or assert. The charm performer's expectation is that the perlocutionary consequence of translating a magical intent into reality will also occur; i.e., trampling, or destroying the curse of the evil eye, whether before or after it affects the victim,

is expected to guard against whatever injury the evil eye might inflict; in fact, to render the evil eye incapable of inflicting injury.

The aural qualities of The Exorcism of the Eye are significant because they represent a simple yet powerful sound patterning device found in ancient and modern charms in numerous English dialects: the precise repetition of a syntactic structure. All lines but the first in this charm contain identical words except for the subject, the preposition, and its object. Of these, lines 2-5 use the same preposition, and lines 6-7 are repeated exactly. This simple repetition maximizes the charmer's intent, while here Carmichael's manipulation of syntactic structure conspires to reinforce intent as well. The opening line of this charm employs the traditional subject/verb order in contrast to lines 2-7, which invert the traditional subject/verb order of Modern English. This sets the incantatory language apart:

Line 1:
SUBJECT/ VERB/ PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE

Lines 2 - 7:
CONJUNCTION/ VERB/ ARTICLE/ SUBJECT/ PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE
and, as we see, the effect of the adverbial sequences ("as tramples the duck . . ." etc.) is the establishment of a connection between the speaker and the other "trampers"--the horse, the cow, and the force that controls the elements of this world--to whom he compares himself.

High-Intensity Banishing Charms

The following charm for a sick animal leaves little doubt as to its intensity. It acknowledges that the victim has been "stryken"; i.e., a negative condition has invaded the charm performer's livestock, and it must be cast out. This charm seeks to accomplish its purpose through enlisting the aid of almighty God, Who can crush the "bytter" beneath his heel and boot. Although this charm can be classified as Early Modern English, the archaic quality of its language is immediately apparent, illustrating the immensely conservative quality of many historically derived charms. It was handed down through the generations with little change and was still in this form when George Lyman Kittredge, who is better known as a Chaucer scholar than as a folklorist, collected it in this century.

Bytter Bytten Charm (Kittredge, p. 39)⁶

John is thy christen name, John
 And thre bytter bytter hathe the bytten,
 Thre bytter bytter hathe the nyppen
 And thre bytter bytter hathe the stryken,
 Besechyng almyghty god, whedder itt were eye or tong or
 hart, the better shall be your heele and boote, the
 father the son and the holy gooste.

This would seem to be the Bytter Bytten performance context: although it is not known whether the harm proceeds from the evil eye, a malevolent incantation ("tong"), or from within the animal itself (its "hart"), three "bytter" ("biters") have "bytten," "nyppen" ("nipped") and "stryken" an animal. In this charm, as in the above Exorcism of the Eye, the imagery of trampling or "walking all over" the

charmed element symbolizes the charm performer's power over outside forces, and here the imagery of trampling a foe is suggested through the metonymic association of the "heel and boot."

The Bytter Bytten charm, which was used to cure distempered livestock from the Middle Ages on, also draws upon the power of polysemy, the phenomenon in which single words have different, yet obviously related meanings. The verb "nip," for example, has a primary meaning of biting or pinching ("nipping at his heels"), but it also has more ancient polysemous connotations of blighting through extreme cold and disconnecting a living organism from its life-source. These meanings are preserved in formulaic expressions like "it's nippy out" and "nip it in the bud." Thus we see that the animal has not simply been attacked ("bytten"), but that the attack has caused it to be "nyppen," a word that suggests a number of possibilities.

What this suggests, for a charm that has been used for centuries, is the extent to which semantic resonance can broaden a charm's application. Although the primary purpose of The Byter Bytten Charm continues to be to aid ailing livestock, by 1612 one of the Lancashire witches, Annie Whittle, was using it to make good ale (or "bitters").⁷ Since biters are those things which bite, including the cold (as in "bitter cold"), and certain tart sensations of taste (as in "a pint of bitters"), Whittle could draw upon the

polysemous relationship between biters and bitters to broaden this charm's application to include brewing.

Polysemous relations can be between two different parts of speech, as was the case in Mak's use of the noun and verb "reel" in the Shepherd's Play of Chapter Three, or between words of divergent etymological evolution, as is the case here in Annie Whittle's conflation of the verbal agentive "biter" and the adjectivally derived noun "bitters." In the first case, the phenomenon of polysemy enriches the meaning of the charm, while in the second, polysemy expands the arena of applications for the charm. But regardless of its specific intention, the Bytter Bytten charm performer translates that intention into magical reality through the use of two common sound patterning devices. Identical repetition in this case entails a resultant alliterative pattern (bytter/ bytter/bytten), while the end-rhyme of bytten/ nytten/ stryken enhances its aural cohesion.

The following Charm Against the Hiccups was anthologized in Carole Potter's Knock On Wood: An Encyclopedia of Talismans, Charms, Superstitions and Symbols (1983). It provides another example of a high-intensity banishing charm, for its purpose is to cast out a troublesome condition of mysterious origin and uncertain physical remedy.

Charm Against the Hiccups (Potter, 1983, p. 101)

Lick up, hiccup
Stick up, hiccup
Trick up, hiccup
Begone, hiccup!

The most interesting aspects of this charm involve the use of sound patterning. End-rhyme and identical repetition work together here to empower the language, and although the surface parameters of metrical patterning have shifted to some extent in modern English, we can still see that the underlying functions of the metrical devices of older English charms endure today.

Meter in charms functions in accordance with the magical precept I have termed the Dynamic of Opposition. This law informs the rhythm of magical language on several levels. The most basic level of opposition in rhythm is between sound and no sound. Sounds cannot exist except within the context of no sound, and indeed, if sounds were not in opposition to silence, they would have no separate essence. Within the realm of sound, another layer of oppositional dynamic exists between sound which is stressed and sound which is not. As is the case with the opposition of sound to silence, stressed words or syllables would have no special role if they were not juxtaposed to those which are not stressed. Whether the pattern is two-stress, as it is here, three-stress, or four-stress, metrical irregularity sets the most important part of the charm apart. For example, in The Hiccup Charm, the first three lines have a regular trochaic structure:

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/   x   /   x
Lick up, hiccup
/   x   /   x
Stick up, hiccup
/   x   /   x
Trick up, hiccup,
```

but the last, incantatory line opposes an iambus to a trochee:

x / / x
Begone, hiccup!

Thus, on a broader scale, this juxtaposition of some rhythmic patterns to others can be seen to create a dynamic which empowers the whole utterance in accordance with the Dynamic of Opposition.

Low-Intensity Binding Charms

Now that we have seen some of the ways in which low- and high-intensity banishing charms work their magic, let us turn to analysis of both low- and high-intensity binding charms. The intent of the following low-intensity binding charm, The Milking Song (Carmichael, 1993, p. 39), is to summon or connect the milk with the milker, as the cow is ordered (albeit ingratiatingly) to "give the milk." This and many work charms of the British Highlands can be classified as low intensity because they merely seek to reinforce a connection which already exists on the physical plane. In this case, the milker is in the physical process of extracting milk from the udder of the cow, and the accompanying charm uses a traditional imperative directed toward the milch cow to ensure a successful milking.

Milking Song (Carmichael, 1993, p. 39)

Give the milk, my treasure!
Give the milk, my treasure!
Give the milk, my treasure.
Give quietly, with steady flow
Give the milk, my treasure,
With steady flow and calmly.

It is not difficult, even for those of us who have never milked a cow, to associate the identical repetition with the repetitive physical gesture of milking. Identical repetition appears in lines 1, 2, 3, and 5 in this charm, reinforcing the rhythmic accomplishment of the task at hand. Since this is a low-intensity binding charm, which seeks to reinforce connections already presumed to exist, we should not be surprised that the two adverbial phrases in lines 4 and 6 vary only slightly from the incantatory utterances of lines 1, 2, 3, and 5. Here their slight variation is not intended to set the incantatory language apart, as in The Charm Against The Hiccups, but rather to reinforce it.

The Butter Charm, below, also varies its metrical pattern, not to set the incantatory language apart but rather to regularize and reinforce it. This Butter Charm is widely attested in both England and America, and I first came across it in a book of nursery rhymes for children called First Poems of Childhood (1967). Imagine yourself again in a slightly more bucolic setting in which one would sit by a churn and attempt to make butter. The paddle, clasped in both hands, descends and rises in the churn in time to the steady rhythm of the charm:

Butter Charm (Kittredge, 1956, p. 169)

/ / x / x / / x / x
Come, butter, come. [rest] Come, butter, come. [rest]

/ x / x / x /
Peter's standing at the gate,

/ x / x / x x
Waiting for his buttered cake.

In this charm, vowels also provide associational connections which serve to regularize the rhythm of the work that needs to be done:

k^h^m b^Dr k^h^m k^h^m b^Dr k^h^m

Like many charms, this one contains a truncated narrative section, but notice that in the incantatory segment, the imperative "Come, butter, come," the vowel, although orthographically different here, actually repeats the same phoneme. This sound is the lax, mid central vowel /^h/ . The consistent repetition of this "middle of the road" vowel provides a counterpoint of phonological stability to the front and back positions of the word-initial consonantal stops (/k/, /b/), and this vocalic regularity also helps to link the word-initial stops with the word-final continuants (/m/, /r/).

Like banishing charms, binding charms of both low and high intensity can have a concrete physical goal, as in The Milking Song and the Butter Charm, or they may have a more general purpose, like the following Luck Charm. Like the binding work charms above, the Luck Charm is of low intensity. It seeks merely to reinforce a connection which already exists in the charm performer's sense of reality. However, rather than a definite, concrete goal, it would seem to have a psychological one, that of increasing its speaker's confidence.

This charm is nonhistorically derived, and was recently composed by an individual, Janice Renee, and included in her

book on modern metaphysical techniques entitled Playful Magic. Earlier I argued for the legitimacy of nonhistorically derived charms like this one, because, among other reasons, they can illustrate the variability of the aural component of modern charms. The Luck Charm is clearly intended to reinforce the confidence of its performer, but much more in the manner of good prose than poetry, which is more often the case with traditionally derived charms.

Luck Charm (Renee, 1994; p. 222).

All channels of good are open to me.
 Luck comes to me in unexpected ways,
 and unexpected places.
 I have the golden touch,
 and everything that touches me is golden.
 I receive golden gifts,
 for I am Lady Fortune's child.

Like charms of ancient provenance, modern English charms also use simple statements to perform magical actions. Thus, in the above example, when the charm performer utters the prescribed words, she also asserts her expectation that the good luck of Lady Fortune's child will continue. The assertion of her expectation entails the perlocutionary consequence that magically, her expectations will be fulfilled.

In the manner of good prose, this charm contains no identical repetition of words or phrases, no end-rhyme, and no identifiable metrical structure. This apparent privileging of content over the identifiable sound patterning devices common to poetry has surfaced in several modern charms I have collected, but it cannot be said to be

an identifying characteristic of all nonhistorically-derived charms (as my later discussion of a rune-casting charm will illustrate). Even here, however, we see the remnants of a poetic device found in many historically derived charms: the continuation of ancient alliterative patterns in the key words of the charm: good/golden/gifts.

We have now seen two examples of low-intensity binding charms that had specific physical purposes, as well as a charm that had a more general purpose--that of ensuring the continuation of success in this world. We turn now to a Bahai Blessing, a low-intensity binding charm that has an obviously spiritual intent. This blessing is anthologized in Earth Prayers, a volume which its editors call a work of "Earthly spirituality" (1991, p. xvii).

Bahai Blessing (Roberts and Amidon, Eds., 1991, p. 50).

Blessed is the spot, and the house,
 and the place, and the city,
 and the refuge, and the cave,
 and the valley, and the land,
 and the sea, and the island,
 and the meadow where mention of God hath been
 made,
 and his praise glorified.

With this charm we see the Bahai performer calling upon a syntax that places a series of eleven items, all of which refer to physical places, in a nonhierarchical sequence. As she does so, she makes use of syntactic regularity and a predictable sound pattern to lead up to a single phrase that is set apart from the elements that precede it.

The practice of placing clauses or phrases side by side without imposing a hierarchical structure upon them through

the use of subordinating conjunctions is referred to as "parataxis," and the paratactic style is considered by some to be "primitive." (See, for example, S.O. Andrew in Syntax and Style in Old English). Nevertheless, in so far as parataxis enables the speaker (or writer) to give equal prominence to two separate ideas, it can perform a useful function. In The Bahai Blessing nothing interrupts the paratactic pattern until all elements to be blessed have been enumerated. Like a legal contract, this blessing is meticulous and thorough, listing all conceivable locations even when their semantic fields overlap (as in valley/land, place/city, refuge/cave). The syntactic parallelism and the sound repetition this engenders provide sub-sentient connections as the universe of the blessing is encircled and the speaker directs a special attention to the meadow "where mention of God hath been made, and his praise glorified."

Dual-Intensity Binding Charms

Turning now to Consecration of the Seed, we see a charm that clearly has both physical and spiritual purposes, and which can be taken either as a low-or high-intensity charm. Consecration of Seed can be taken to be a passive, low-intensity charm which seeks merely to reinforce the possibility of fertility which the farmer has taken pains to ensure through physical means like fertilization, crop rotation, irrigation, etc. As in the Evil Eye banishing charm above, however, the language is ambiguous enough that

it could also be a high-intensity binding charm that attempts to create a powerful connection with fertility where there has been none.

Consecration of the Seed (excerpt, Carmichael, 1993, p.35).

I will go out to sow the seed,
In name of Him who gave it growth;
I will place my front in the wind,
And throw a gracious handful on high.
Should a grain fall on a bare rock,
It shall have no soil in which to grow;
As much as falls into the earth,
The dew will make it to be full.

This eight-line sequence from a longer charm collected by Carmichael in the British Highlands is divided into two equal parts. In the first four lines, with their repeated "I will" phrases, the speaker asserts his intention to perform a physical act, that of sowing seed. With the next four lines, he again projects his positive expectations, saying with full belief that the seed he sows is indeed consecrated "in the name of Him who gave it growth," and that the seed will grow.

With Charm to Bride the Aid-Woman, we see, again, an example of a charm that can be read either as a low-or high-intensity charm. If, for example, the following charm were to be performed by a healthy woman who had had seven uncomplicated pregnancies and was now pregnant with her eighth child, it might well be intended by the charmer to merely reinforce a positive connection that is already perceived to exist--a form of additional magical "insurance" for a safe delivery. In this context it would be classified

as a low intensity binding charm. If, however, the Charm to Bride the Aid-Woman were performed by a woman who had had several miscarriages and who sought to establish a connection between health and a safe delivery and her own reality, it would function as a high intensity binding charm. But let us turn to the charm itself.

Charm to Bride the Aid-Woman (Carmichael, 1993; p. 114)

There came to me assistance,
Mary fair and Bride;
As Anna bore Mary,
As Mary bore Christ,
As Eile bore John the Baptist
Without flaw in him,
And thou me in mine inbearing,
Aid me, O Bride!

As Christ was conceived of Mary
Full perfect on every hand
Assist thou me, foster-mother,
The conception to bring from the bone;
As thou didst aid the Virgin of joy,
Without gold, without corn, without kine⁸,
Aid thou me, great is my sickness,
Aid me, O Bride.

High-Intensity Binding Charms

Although I have shown that some charms depend upon the context and the intent of the charmer for their classification in terms of high or low intensity, many other charms contain clear and explicit language which makes their level of intensity clear. Such is the case with the following Charm For Dairy Abundance, which was collected by Kittredge in England in this century. His informant told him it was to be performed in the barn or stable on the last night of the year.⁹ At this time of endings and new

beginnings, the charmer seeks to establish, or re-establish, a connection between abundance and her livestock. Here the physical performance does not involve something as direct as the act of milking; rather the charmer must swing a bridle made of hair overhead while reciting these words:

Charm for Dairy Abundance (Kittredge, 1956; p. 169)

Hares' milk and mares' milk
An' a' the beas' that bears milk,
Come to me!

The salient characteristic of this charm is the semantic resonance which reinforces the charmer's intent by incorporating numerous meaning substrata through the manipulation of spoken words. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, Archibald Hill (1985) pointed out that homophones could provide textual "signals" which bring "associational meanings" to the schema of the utterance.

Earlier work with symbolism advanced the notion that on a subliminal level we participate in consensual symbolic schema which resonate through our psyches (Eliade, 1975; 1991). More recently Kroth (1992) isolated the property of condensation, whereby vast associational schemas were "boiled down" into telegraphic symbolic images.

Applying this to the meaning relation of homophony, in which words that sound the same have different meanings, we see that in the Charm For Dairy Abundance the dual homophonic symbolism of "hare" and "hair" may enrich the meaning of the dairy charm. In Norse mythology, hares are the symbol of Freya, goddess of fecundity. Medieval

allegory endowed the hare with the additional attributes of fleetness and diligence (Cirlot, 1962; p. 133) so the hare in this dairy charm symbolizes the productivity of the dairy cows and the consequent abundance of milk due to the cows' fertility.

The homophone "hair" seems, on the surface, to be unrelated, yet an examination of its magical significance suggests otherwise. Hair also symbolizes energy, or the vital life force, and fertility (Pinedo, cited in Cirlot, 1962), so its presence is often linked with vitality and the will to succeed (Paneth, cited in Cirlot, 1962). That this association between the homophones "hare" and "hair" is not coincidental seems to be corroborated by the fact that this charm must be performed while swinging a cow tether made of hair.

Following this line of thought, we note that in the first line of Charm for Dairy Abundance there is also a reference to "mare's milk." A mare is a female horse which Jung said symbolizes fertility, motherhood, and milk--and also the magical side of humanity (Cirlot, 1962; p. 145). Horses also symbolize fleetness and, when in pairs, the duality of good and evil (Riviere, 1950). A homophonous relation imbues the word "mare" with additional meaning: that of the nightmare. We saw in Chapter Three that this dangerous, dark force is often charmed in stables with horse paraphernalia. Here the charm performer summons the milk of the good mare and that of her shadow, the nightmare, thus affirming her power over forces for both good and ill.

In fact, the charmer reasserts this position of authority through the use of homophonous relations in the second line of the charm. The surface meaning is, "(I summon) the milk of all the beasts that bear milk." But in his careful transcription, Kittredge writes "beas," acknowledging the fact that in pronunciation homophony meanings could occur. The homophonous relationship here is with the word "bees." Why should the charm incorporate the symbolism of the bee? Bees symbolize the feminine principle,¹⁰ and although they do not produce milk, they do produce a nourishing liquid for their young which can also provide nourishment for humans: honey. Honey, like milk, is the product of a mysterious and elaborate process, has been a staple in our diet, and has been symbolically connected to milk in our Western psyche at least since Moses led his people to the land of--milk and honey.¹¹

A final homophonous relation empowers this charm with additional meanings. The verb "to bear" means to disseminate, render, or give; yet idiomatically we use it to refer to trees and plants rather than milch cows; animals give milk and trees bear fruit. The use of the verb "bears" in line two enables the charmer to rhyme with "hares" in the first line, but it also accesses the symbolic schema of the ursine mammal, the bear. This animal, like the hare and the horse, has symbolic connotations of primal matter, and it, like the nightmare, is a dangerous predator, a shadow of the

positive forces of primal energy symbolized by bees and honey.

Thus we see that in Modern English charms, as in their predecessors, the use of homophony facilitates semantic resonance, allowing additional meaning schemas to semantically resound through charms, thereby enriching them and perhaps empowering their performers.

Another binding charm of indisputably high intensity comes to us from the Christian liturgy of the traditional marriage rite. These are its familiar words:

For Better or for Worse (Episcopal Book of Common Prayer, p. 427)

In the name of God, I, N., take you, N., to be my wife/husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death.

This charm, with its intention to bind two separate individuals together, is obviously a high-intensity charm. To accomplish this purpose, the prescribed words call upon "antonymy," a device which, as we saw in Chapter Three, consolidates power by gathering in all elements that lie between the two opposite poles of a semantic field, like so many fish in a net. Here the participants vow to remain bound to each other in all possible circumstances, and the antonymy of their spoken words increases magical force by delineating a sphere of reference that includes all elements within the polarity of that reference: better/worse, richer/poorer, sickness/health.

The charm formula just considered is intended to bind mortal beings together. The next charm attempts to establish a connection between a human speaker and a pantheon of gods. The Modern Rune-Casting Charm, used to place a rune-caster in proper relationship to his deities, commands the high ones he addresses to hear him.

Modern Rune-Casting Charm (Gundarsson, 1990, P. 276)

Hear me, high ones, Ye Aesir and Asynjur
 And hallowed, enfolding earth!
 My words through the worlds ring roaring rune-might
 Ring in the Well of Wyrð.
 Hail to Odhinn Odhroerir's Lord
 Hail Galdr-god great
 Who runes doth rede and songs send forth
 Hail to All-Father high!

This charm shows how the magical Law of Association continues to empower modern magical language on the most basic levels. Derek and Julia Parker (1992) have suggested that the literal, quantifiable patterns of sound vibrations which modern science has been able to show us on voice graphs and the like are in part responsible for the power of words in charms. For example, in this modern rune-casting charm, the sound patterning in alliteration connects the words and strengthens meaning, and hence power.

Numerous connections of alliteration and consonance occur in this charm, but the dominant pattern is the repeated utterance of the phoneme /r/. "Ring Roaring Rune-might" alliterates with r in line four: "Ring in the Well of Wyrð." The Law of Association is also seen in the relationship between the acoustically related continuants /r/ and /w/ in this line. In this American runecaster's

dialect, word-final r also reinforces the pattern: "hearr me, ye Aesirr and Asynjurr" as do connections of consonance inside words: "My words through the worlds ring roaring rune-might."

It is not a coincidence that the predominant alliterative sound is the r sound, the sound which begins the word Rune, the sound represented by the rune Rad, R , the rune of ritualized divination which Nigel Pennick (1992, p. 92) says symbolizes "our positive, conscious interaction with our position on the wheel of fortune, a situation with which we must interact harmoniously if we are to live successfully." Through alliteration and consonance, this charm productively applies the Law of Association to improve coherence but also to make connections with the symbolic schema of the runes which the charmer hopes to use for successful divination.

The Dynamic Opposition of Two Modern High-Intensity Binding Charms

Thus far in this chapter we have seen examples of low and high-intensity banishing and binding charms and we have inquired into their salient components of "thought" and "word." In concluding, I will present an analysis of two powerful high-intensity binding charms: one Christian and one Wiccan. The salient operative components of "thought" and "word" which empower them will be addressed, but the analysis will turn mainly upon the component of "deed." In the process, attention will be given to the way their

contextualization within the culture contributes to an oppositional dynamic of performance.

The first selection is a Christian charm from the British Highlands meant to rejoice in the acceptance of a righteous and natural process--a maiden coming of age. Although most blessings are classified as low-intensity charms because they seek to reinforce a connection already seen to exist, this charm's goal (to bind positive maidenly attributes and divine affection to the object of the charm) and its ambition of scope lead me to classify it as a high-intensity binding charm.

The Invocation of the Graces
(Carmichael, 1992; p.21)

1 I bathe thy palms
In showers of wine,
In the lustral fire,
In the seven elements,
5 In the juice of the rasps,
In the milk of honey,
And I place the nine pure choice graces
In thy fair, fond face,
The grace of form,
10 The grace of voice,
The grace of fortune,
The grace of goodness,
The grace of wisdom,
The grace of charity,
15 The grace of choice maidenliness,
The grace of whole-souled loveliness,
The grace of goodly speech.

Dark is yonder town,
20 Dark are those therein,
Thou are the brown swan,
Going in among them.
Their hearts are under thy control,
Their tongues are beneath thy sole,
25 Nor will they ever utter a word to give thee offense.

A shade art thou in the heat,
A shelter art thou in the cold,
Eyes art thou to the blind,

- 30 A staff art thou to the pilgrim,
 An island art thou at sea,
 A fortress art thou on land,
 A well art thou in the desert,
 Health art thou to the ailing.
- 35 Thine is the skill of the Fairy Woman,
 Thine is the virtue of Bride the calm,
 Thine is the faith of Mary the mild,
 Thine is the tact of the woman of Greece,
 40 Thine is the beauty of Emir the lovely,
 Thine is the tenderness of Darthula delightful,
 Thine is the courage of Maebh the strong,
 Thine is the charm of Binne-bheul.
- 45 Thou art the joy of all joyous things,
 Thou art the light of the beam of the sun,
 Thou art the door of the chief of hospitality,
 Thou art the surpassing star of guidance,
 Thou art the step of the deer of the hill,
 Thou art the step of the steed of the plain,
 Thou art the grace of the swan swimming,
 Thou art the loveliness of all lovely desires.
- 50 The lovely likeness of the Lord
 Is in thy pure face,
 The loveliest likeness that
 Was upon earth.
- 55 The best hour of the day be thine,
 The best day of the week be thine,
 The best week of the year be thine,
 The best year in the Son of God's domain be thine.
- 60 Peter has come and Paul has come.
 James has come and John has come,
 Muriel and Mary Virgin have come,
 Uriel the all beneficent has come,
 Ariel the beauteousness of the young has come,
 65 Gabriel the seer of the Virgin has come,
 Raphael the prince of the valiant has come,
 And Michael the chief of the hosts has come,
 And Jesus Christ the mild has come,
 And the Spirit of true guidance has come
 70 And the King of kings has come on the helm,
 To bestow on thee their affection and their love,
 To bestow on thee their affection and their love.

Before a more detailed discussion of this charm's
 performance or "deed" elements, I would like to first point
 out the salient operative components of "thought" and "word"

which render it powerful in the minds of its users. In this chapter we have seen some of the ways that metonymy, homophony, polysemy and antonymy can enrich meaning and translate magical intent in the formulaic language of Modern English charms. Here, we see the use of another commonly used semantic component of charms: metaphor, used as a "conduit for ideas," works within a consensual meaning framework (Reddy 1979; p. 290).

First, the warning of lines 19-25 is communicated in metaphoric terms, as the maiden becomes a "brown swan" who may have occasion to find herself in a "dark . . . town." Then the nine graces which were literally invoked in lines 9-17 subsequently take on a metaphoric reality. The maiden's socially sanctioned and consensually agreed upon duties are expressed through the repeated use of metaphor. For example, three of the enumerated duties of a maiden are (1) to provide comfort, (2) to set an ethical example, and (3) to nurture those around her. These duties are expressed in metaphoric language as the maiden is told that she is a shade in the heat, a shelter in the cold, eyes to the blind, a staff to the pilgrim, an island in the sea, a fortress on land, a well in the desert, and health to the ailing.

The joyous privileges of a maiden--i.e., to brighten her sphere with hospitality, wisdom, grace, and loveliness--are again enumerated metaphorically in lines 44-51.

A final salient characteristic of this charm is the way in which its complex narrative frame provides a structure

for its expression of magical intent. Nine graces are invoked, and the charm is composed of a total of nine "movements" or sections: Section 1, lines 1-9 comprise the anointment of the maiden. Section 2, lines 9-18 comprise the imparting of the graces. Section 3, lines 19-25 constitute a warning. Section 4, lines 26-34 enumerate the duties of a maiden. Section 5, lines 35-42 state her virtues. Section 6, lines 43-50 remind her of her joyous privileges. Section 7, lines 51-54 contain an affirmation of the maiden's likeness to the deity. Section 8, lines 55-59 contain a traditional blessing. Section 9, lines 60-72 are an invocation to the Catholic saints, archangels, and trinity. The nine-part structural composition of this charm parallels on a larger scale the nine-part invocation of the graces contained within the charm, thus illustrating the application of another magical law, the Hermetic Maxim.

The Hermetic Maxim expresses the concept of patterns being repeated on smaller and larger scales. This law was named after the magus Hermes Trismegistus, "the thrice great" (Edwardes, 1977, p. 18), who was named after the Greek god Hermes, patron of music, magic, and healing, which was really another name for the Egyptian god of magic, Thoth. Obviously, the Hermetic Maxim has a very long pedigree, but its essential concept can be simply stated: "As above, so below."

This statement reminds us that the patterns and connections we can see in the little, understandable things

are present as well in larger, less comprehensible things we cannot see. During the Middle Ages, the connection between the micro-cosmic and the macro-cosmic was most often related to the correspondence between terrestrial and celestial affairs, which application is still operative, as the recognized similarities between the structure of atoms and solar systems attest. More often, however, modern scholars apply this maxim to a socio-cultural axis, a factor which will be significant in the discussion to follow of the dynamic opposition of performances within the culture.

We turn now to the analysis of the Wiccan high-intensity binding charm. This time, however, the charm is not a celebration of joyous acceptance. Instead, it is a hex performed in a time of trauma and fear. This next charm to be considered here is a profound magical protest of a very unnatural and unrighteous situation: the Gainesville murders of 1990.

In August, 1990, the college community of Gainesville learned that a young female student had been murdered and dismembered in her apartment. During the following week, residents of the community experienced a growing sense of fear caused by the Gainesville murders, a series of killings and mutilations of college students: four women and one man. The nation was appalled by the nature of the crimes, and the community of Gainesville experienced a collective and traumatic reaction to the killings. No physical precautions seemed able to stop what seemed to be an

uncontrollable series of deaths, and the shared sense of helplessness grew.

When physical means do not avail, people do not give up. They turn to magic. On the fifth night of the murders, a small group of Wiccans decided they had had enough. They gathered at a private spot on the shores of Lake Alice, a lake known locally for its alligator-infested waters and its inaccessible far reaches. They stood in a circle and passed a candle wrapped in thread from one woman to the next. As they passed the candle, they chanted this binding charm:

Bound and Found¹²

Let him be bound and found
 bound and found
 bound and found
 Trapped by his own arrogance.

The language here depends on sound repetition strongly emphasized by a pounding rhythmic pattern. To suggest a possible scansion, "Let him be" could be uttered as three unstressed syllables leading up to a strongly stressed

/ /
 "bound and found,"

with the rhyming words gaining the additional power of the magic of three. This thrice-uttered formula is then followed by "trapped," with its double-stopped concluding consonant cluster /pt/, which, like the repeated "bound" and "found," receives strong stress. And then three weakly stressed syllables again prepare the way for strong stress on the first syllable of the noun, "arrogance," which designates the agent of the killer's entrapment.

The two charms just presented obviously differ enormously with respect to length and complexity. The Invocation of the Graces is unusually long. It contains a substantial narrative interlude ("Dark is yonder town . . .") along with nine discrete structural segments, or "movements," while Bound and Found is unusually short for a charm of such high intensity and profound significance for its users. It is utter simplicity in form as well. There are no narrative interludes, no "movements." No semantic resonance, metaphor, or syntactic variation appear to enrich its intent. Bound and Found drives home the intent of the charmers with literal language through direct repetition and end-rhyme.

The Invocation of the Graces and Bound and Found originate from different spiritual traditions, and their users--Christians and Wiccans--would see the elements and functions of their magical performances in opposition. Certainly each group views the other with profound suspicion: To Christians, witches are evil heretics who have been told about the true God but have chosen to worship his nemesis, Satan instead. To Wiccans (who do not believe in Satan), Christians represent the betrayal of the ancient pre-patriarchal goddess; a betrayal which led to the carnage of the crusades, the psychotic sadism of the Inquisition, and the current ecological rape of the planet.

Yet in spite of their differences, the perspectives of these two groups have more in common than members of either

group might be ready to admit. Contemporary Christian tradition is predominantly written and Wiccan tradition is oral, but both draw upon an ancient core of verbal lore (O'Gaea, 1993). The Christian cosmogony is monotheistic, although there is the concept of the Holy Trinity (three gods in one), and there is a diverse hierarchy of saints and angels who are seen as something closer to divine than mortal. The Wiccan cosmogony also has a trinity: the three faces of the goddess (the maiden, matron and crone). And although Wicca is polytheistic, there is the concept of one ultimate creatrix of the universe.

Both traditions believe that they transmit forces from the world of the unknown to the material world. Christians see themselves as bringing energy from the angels and the Holy Spirit, while Wiccans see the energy they channel as equally divine: the "energy of the universe." Both groups also acknowledge that a source of special powers is a female deity figure. In Wicca's case it is the ancient Goddess, while for Catholics, it is Mary, her surviving Christian counterpart.

On the surface, these two charms have opposite intents as well, since the goal of The Invocation of the Graces is to disseminate the positive in the material world and the goal of Bound and Found is to proscribe the negative. In harmony with the magical Dynamic of Opposition, however, the intent of these charms reveals a connection through their polarity. Like two sides of the same coin, they work

reciprocally to benefit the society which contextualizes their performance: one by disseminating good, the other by proscribing evil. But the two charms, different as they are, share a common binding purpose.

The Invocation seeks to accomplish its goals by binding elements of the performer's reality. Here the intent is to bind the positive attributes of maidenliness to the object of the charm, and then to summon the "love and affection" of the angels and triune Godhead and bind it to the now-worthy maiden. Bound and Found is a two-pronged binding charm as well, for it seeks first to bind a murderer to the scene of the crime, and then to bind the negative consequences of his actions to his person. Thus the murderer is to be bound to this area, which then makes it possible for him to be discovered and punished.

Along with the surprising commonality in their perspectives and intent, these charms also share similarities that relate to performance. I have defined the performance elements of charms as follows: (1) writing or inscribing symbols or text in a particular manner, (2) the method of verbal delivery, (3) incorporation of magically and symbolically significant objects, and (4) accompanying physical action. Neither of the two charms requires any writing, but both share repetition in verbal delivery, and both charms also use magically and symbolically significant objects.

In explicit language within the text, the Invocation of the Graces mentions the accessories which are required in its performance: wine, a flame, raspberry juice, and honey. Each of these substances symbolizes the sacred purity and fruitfulness of life. Bound and Found does not contain a reference to accessories within the charm itself, but I obtained a description of the accessory (a black candle wrapped tightly with thread) in a personal interview. The object here symbolizes death and bondage. Again, like cultural antonyms, the accessories of these two magical performances encircle both poles of meaning: life and death, fruitfulness and bondage for the benefit of their context cultures.

The functions of the magical performances of the Christian invocation and the Wiccan binding hex again show how they are related through their opposition. Although many Christians remain skeptical of invocatory utterances of this type, the symbolism and deities summoned serve to reinform Christians of their traditional spiritual infrastructure, and through this process, reinforce the ascendant paradigm--a paradigm with all the power of a historically sanctioned organization.

Wiccans subscribe to an alternative paradigm: their magical tradition eschews organization beyond the very immediate level of a local coven and their magical orientation is divergent from the Christian norm of their community (Dunwich, 1993). Thus their magical performance

reminds the community of the existence of an alternative paradigm. Providing a contrasting schema within a community often provokes ridicule and hostility, yet the functions of these two magical performances, although in opposition, manifest a certain reciprocity in their polarity.

On the microcosmic level of sound patterning in the magical language of charms, we know that sound has meaning only when juxtaposed to silence, rhythm can occur only in a juxtaposition of stress and its absence, and phonemes can impart meaning only through associational and oppositional relations to each other. Sounds, then, are operative through their conformity to the magical Law of Association and its sublaw, the Dynamic of Opposition.

On a somewhat larger plane, we have seen the Law of Association at work in lexical meaning relations, requiring that the complete schema of meaning can be seen only when the connotative connections achieved through the use of homophony, polysemy, and metonymy are acknowledged. Similarly, the dynamic of Opposition informs the effectiveness of antonymy, for antonyms are connected through their polarity by their inclusion in the same semantic field. Thus the magical Law of Association and its sublaw, the Dynamic of Opposition can be seen to be operative on the lexical level as well.

When we remember that "as above, so below," we are licensed to assert that the Law of Association and its sublaw, the Dynamic of Opposition can be operative on a

language/culture axis as well. The micro-rules that we have seen governing sounds and lexical relations in magical language according to the Law of Association and the Dynamic of Opposition, are the same macro-rules at work between magical performances within our culture.

The performances of the Christian invocation within the ascendant paradigm require the oppositional performances of the Wiccan hex within the descendant paradigm in order to have meaning within the culture. O'Keefe (1982) expressed a similar perspective when he defined magic as real social action which, when it enters into a dialectic with religion, renews the latter. Thus, we see that even when magical performances are in opposition, they are cultural associates.

The magical Law of Association and the Dynamic of Opposition are at work in charms on the levels of sound patterning and lexical meaning relations. They are also at work in culture-wide magical performance patterns, empowering interconnected elements and providing meaning on micro and macro levels. Whether the intent is to bind or banish, and whether the intensity is high or low, there are surprising connections between magical voices.

Notes

1. Our modern culture still retains the notion of charming animals in our art, however. For example, in Free Willie, last summer's popular pro-cetacean film, a young boy sings a charm to a captive whale and thereby frees him.

2. For my original remarks on this topic, see Cook, "A structural Analysis of Magical Language in an Old English Charm," in Focus on Linguistics: Working Papers in Linguistics. Vol. III, March 1993.

3. I have personally collected examples of each of these in my research.

4. Kittredge (p. 40) recognized the metonymic relation of "it happened before" in many British charms of the last two centuries. He specifically mentioned the prevalence of the tooth-ache charm, Petrus sedebat, in which a holy personage, like Peter, suffers and is cured. Reciting what "happened before" in proper form ensures that it will "happen again" to the charmer. Storms (1975, p. 288 - 290) includes versions of this charm in Anglo-Saxon.

5. Some, but not all end rhymes are also minimal pairs; in linguistic terms, a pair of words with different meanings which have the same number of phonemes and differ in only one phoneme in a corresponding position:

cat
hat

Not all single end-rhymes are minimal pairs, however. 'Stones' and 'bones' differ in two phonemes in corresponding positions

stones
bones

Thus, although they are true end rhymes, they are not minimal pairs.

6. Dalyell (1973) p. 23 also mentions this charm, but includes it in a slightly altered form:

Thrie bitters hes the bitt
In the tung, the eye, the hart,--that's worst
Other thrie, thy beit mon be
In the name of the Father, Son, and Holie Ghost

7. Kittredge tells us that Annie Whittle said she used the charm "to helpe drinke that was forspoken or bewitched." Since brewing and baking have been crucial since ancient times, it is not surprising that charms to protect these activities have endured. Other ale and leaven charms can be found in Cockayne's Leechdoms, II and Herrick's Charmes, Riverside Edition.

8. Although this charm is in modern English, occasional archaisms appear, as is common in the conservative language of charms. Kine is the archaic plural of cow.

9. Kittredge (1956) implies that the intent of this charm is actually to steal other dairy farmers' milk, but I see nothing in the usage to justify this position.

10. I refer the reader to the Old English charm for bees, in which they are addressed as females: "siegewives."

11. That milk and honey have a magical connection is also illustrated in the charm called "The Invocation of the Graces." This charm refers to the "milk of honey."

12. I obtained a description of this magical performance in my fieldwork. One of the participants, whom I will call Robin Wood to protect her privacy, served as an informant. She described the event and explained the intentions of the participants to me.

CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSION

Summary

This dissertation began by raising questions about the definition of magic in general and charms in particular. It presented a broad definition of "magic" as a universally extant spiritual orientation of ancient provenance which seeks to affect aspects of the material world by drawing upon powers perceived as supernatural. In doing so, it showed that many aspects of charm performance are not incompatible with certain aspects of religious practice.

Within this context, selected charms were shown to be expressions of magical intent to either bind or banish elements of the charm performer's reality. Attention was given to the ways such intentions were translated through the use of formulaic language into magical action. Charms, it was observed, could conceivably be composed solely of words or of physical action, but discussion proceeded upon the assumption that charms conform to a continuum of completeness, and charms that seemed to provide opportunity for analyzing aspects of performance were selected for analysis.

This dissertation took the position that some charms employ the semantic devices of semantic resonance and lexical meaning relations in ways that reinforce the translation of the charm performer's magical intent into reality. It addressed the essential characteristics of speech acts as defined by Austin, Searle, and others, and attempted to ask Austin's question, "How do we do things with words?" with reference to an Old English charm Against Misbirth, a Middle English charm Against Thieves, and two Modern English charms: The Exorcism of the Eye and Janice Renee's Luck Charm.

This discussion also argued that metrical variation, sound association (alliteration, vowel harmony, and end-rhyme), and both imitative sound and sound symbolism may well contribute to the power of charms. Here the power of alliteration was seen to have particular value not just in Old English charms, where it was prescribed by metrical convention, but also in Middle English charms, as illustrated by the charm Against Thieves, and Modern English charms like the schoolyard banishing charm Sticks and Stones and the Runecasting Charm.

In similar fashion, the types of sound repetition that superseded the alliterative convention were seen to function with particular effectiveness not just in Middle English charms like the charm Against Epilepsy and the Fever and Mak's Nightspell, but also in Modern English charms like the Bytter Bytten charm, and the charm Against Hiccups.

Here, as the focus moved from Old to Middle to Modern English charms, it became increasingly clear that underlying parameters of sound association remained constant as the surface manifestations varied in accordance with the changing aural profile of the language.

The primary focus here has been on what the words of charms tell us about verbal magic. Some attention, however, has been given to the writing or inscription of magical formulae, the incorporation of magically and symbolically significant objects, and accompanying physical actions. Along with the identification of the elements of charm performance, this discussion has analyzed the functions of charm performance as well. Understanding how charm performance reinforces a culture of its traditional schemas and thereby affirms cultural values has led to a recognition that magical performance can be contextualized within either an ascendant or a descendant spiritual paradigm. Moreover, opposing performances participate in a cultural reciprocity whereby each performance enriches the meaning of the other within the culture.

Limitations of the Research

There are several important limitations to the present research. The most obvious is that the element of secrecy imposed upon charm performers by the persecution of the Christian church has moderately limited the corpus of available material in Old English, and severely limited it

in Middle English, when the tension between the ascendant Christian and descendant pagan paradigms was greatest. Since the admission of even knowing a Christian charm could mean execution, it is not surprising that many magical formulae have been lost. Another limitation is that the Old and Middle English charms have come down to us exclusively in written form, and the accompanying methods of oral delivery and performance are seldom provided. Similarly, much of the cultural context of the charms must be reconstructed from available texts, many of which present an extremely biased view of the material.

The opinion of many members of the scholarly community that magical practice within our own culture is unworthy of serious inquiry has also limited the present research. There is scant linguistic analysis of our own culture's magical language, and that which does exist is scattered across the disciplines of anthropology, folklore, and literature. It nevertheless seems evident that the use of charms to address the basic needs for food, health, safety, and love remain constant, while surface applications adapt to the current preoccupations of the society.

Directions for Further Research

One avenue for further research lies in the exploration of additional sources for charms. This dissertation obtained a representative body of charms in Old, Middle, and Modern English primarily from literary and historical

sources, but other as yet unexploited sources exist. The legal archives of both the United States and Great Britain represent one possible area for fruitful research because the transcripts of trials and interrogations often contain charms verbatim.

Another direction which further research could take is the comparative analysis of ethnic charms. In what ways, for example, do Jewish charms against the evil eye differ from those used by Hispanics? At which junctures do similarities appear? The answers to these questions, analyzed in light of the work on culture and communication by scholars like Vygotsky and Bruner (1985), could contribute meaningful insights into cross cultural research.

Finally, the most obvious direction for further research is in the analysis and comparison of different genres of magical language. This dissertation discussed the operative components of thought, word, and deed in one type of magical utterance: charms. Yet numerous other types of magical language are represented in our literature and current culture. For example, the language of prophesy and divination has identifiable characteristics which could be productively compared and contrasted with those of charms. Furthermore, although the link between poetry and prophesy has been previously identified and is well-represented in literary studies,¹ a linguistic analysis of the interface between these two types of formulaic speech has yet to appear. Such an analysis could provide interesting clues to

both the evolution and current structure of poetry, and might even offer some creative pedagogic tools to the poetry teacher.

Closing Remarks

In our study of charms, we have seen that charms work because of the productive interaction of their elements. One important interaction is that between the elements of thought and word. In his Course in General Linguistics (1986, p.111), Ferdinand de Saussure realized that our language is at the interface of intent and articulation and "the contact between them gives rise to a form, not a substance." Indeed, it is the connection between thought and word which gives meaning to an utterance.

Again, it is the interaction between the sounds of words themselves which determines meaning in charms, for sounds have no meaning except in relation to one another. Roman Jakobson (1978, p. 66) pointed out that "language is the only system which is composed of elements which are signifiers and yet at the same time signify nothing." In fact, sounds are not signifiers; combinations of sounds are. Saussure (1986, p.111) also recognized the importance of the interaction of sounds when he remarked that "a science of sounds assumes importance for us only when two or more sounds are structurally interconnected."

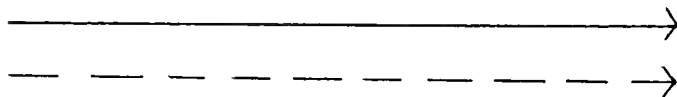
At a broader level, it is the interactive dynamic between sound and silence, stress and its absence, which

gives rhythm its power to enhance the meaning of a charm. Likewise, the interactive qualities of alliteration, consonance, vowel harmony and repetition enable rhyme to provide cohesion and thus enhance meaning in charms. On the level of cultural cognition, sounds interact with collective images in sound symbolism to facilitate access to ideas and emotions with telegraphic efficiency.

As the arena of charm performance expands from the microcosmic to the macrocosmic, the interaction of elements continues to determine meaning in charm use. For example, at the interface of word and deed, a charm's meaning deepens and its power increases each time its words interact with significant objects or physical actions. Likewise, a charm's performance functions of reinforcing and reaffirming within the culture can occur only through the interaction between the participants.

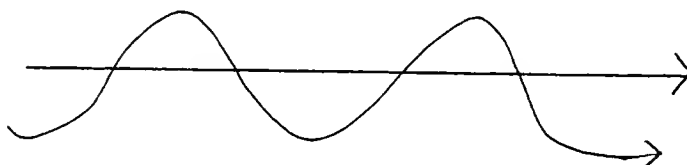
Finally, at the broad level of paradigms in cultural context, charms which proceed from divergent paradigms interact within the culture, and in so doing, give each other meaning.² Dell Hymes (1974, p. 21) suggested that at any point in history, central or ascendant paradigms, which he called cynosures, co-existed with peripheral traditions, or descendant paradigms. Koerner (1976) calls the notion of coexistence between ascendant and descendant paradigms the Mainstream vs. Undercurrent Model (p. 194) and illustrates the relationship with a straight line representing the

ascendant paradigm and a dotted line representing the descendant paradigm:



Yet this view represents the paradigms in stasis: the dominant moving ever onward in a linear progression toward ultimate truth and the peripheral remaining forever an undercurrent. This conception acknowledges neither the interaction of ascendant and descendant paradigms, nor the fluid nature of ascendancy. It does not account for the fact that what were once peripheral paradigms can assume ascendancy while predominant theories can fade in importance and credibility and become underground notions. Thus pre-Christian paganism gradually became an underground, peripheral paradigm, while the formerly insignificant paradigm of Christianity achieved cynosure status.

How do notions move from one position to another, and to all the points that lie between the extremes? Historical flukes, climate of opinion, societal trends and the day-to-day intellectual activity of a culture conspire to manipulate the ascendancy of paradigms. Koerner (1976) suggests a relative Progress Model (p. 196) to illustrate how paradigms can shift. Again, the ascendant paradigm is represented by a straight line while the descendant paradigm weaves about it:



But again, this model shows only one paradigm in motion, while the other remains fixed. From what we have seen of the interaction of elements within charms, we can posit that a similar dynamic is at work between charms on the cultural level: a dynamic which entails reciprocity in opposition. I suggest that the Pendulum Swing model which Koerner (1982) proposed to account for the dynamic aspect in the history of a discipline can be used to illustrate the dynamic opposition of ascendant and descendant paradigms in a culture. Thus charms from opposing paradigms interact dynamically to give each other meaning within the culture:



As above, so below. From the most minute phonemic juxtaposition to the broadest cultural interaction, charms derive their meaning and their power from the productive interaction of their components. That is how charms work.

Notes

1. James L. Kugel (1990) has done important work in this area. See Poetry and Prophecy, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

2. Thomas Kuhn (1970) has articulated the phenomenon of intellectual paradigms and the ways in which they behave within a community. Kuhn (1970) and Cole (1985) suggest that paradigms can govern thought even when they themselves are not fully understood (p. 44).

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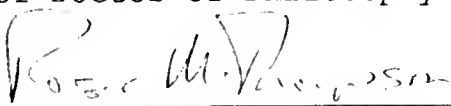
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Leilani Cook is a native of the South where she has lived and worked for most of her life. She was born in Hendersonville, North Carolina, and spent several years of her childhood residing in Spain and France. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in English literature from the University of Florida. Upon completion of her doctoral work, she intends to continue teaching and writing about language. Leilani Cook resides in Gainesville with her three daughters.

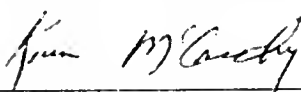
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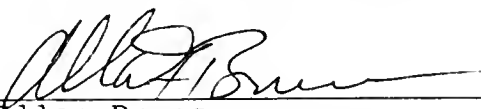
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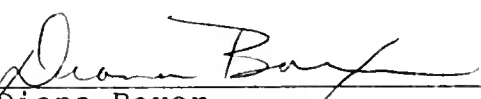
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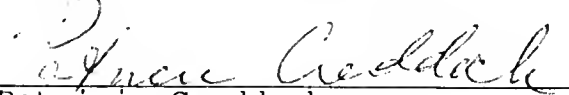
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This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Program in Linguistics in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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